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Notes Toward A Reading of Foscolo's "Sepolcri"

P. M. PASINETTI

Among non-Italians, or, for that matter, among non-literary Italians who know about it from hearsay or from dim scholastic recollection, a certain type of Italian poetry, roughly from Alfieri to Carducci, is assumed to possess mostly local patriotic interest. This is the poetry in which the theme of the Nation is more or less clearly central, and the poet, in one way or another, takes the position of national *vates*. He contributes to creating the poetic myth of his Nation. In that sense he poses himself as a recorder and also as a prophet, in his evocation of past glories, which it is his function to immortalize through poetry, and in his vision of a future more glorious than the present. Vittorio Alfieri in the sonnet *Giorno verrà* explicitly visualized his countrymen's future recognition of his prophecies:

Gli odo già dirmi: - O Vate nostro, in pravi
Secoli nato, eppur create hai queste
Sublimi età, che profetando andavi.

The theme of past glory, depraved present, and future hope of resurgence, has, to mention the obvious, a long tradition in Italian literature from Dante through Petrarch to the last chapter of *The Prince*. Later on, it may seem particularly natural to turn to nineteenth-century Italy for examples of "patriotic Romanticism." However, once we do so, it is significant that while we may have justified the direction of our choice on historical considerations, we end by finding ourselves on literary grounds; we have, in other words, an image of the Nation based, to an overwhelmingly large extent, on literature. That image has a long existence in poetic texts before it acquires one in political reality

and oratory; in fact, the poetic image patently inspires and pervades the political idea.

A poet's vision of his *patria*, unless we mistake the texts of most national anthems for poetry, can be a very complex one. The way in which the *vates* handles the themes of allegiance, of communal sorrow, of glorious evocation, of exhortation, of prophecy, can among other things provide subtle insights into the very idea of the Nation as a cultural entity and a symbol of the human condition in general. Something like the notion of the "concrete universal" in poetry may once more be helpful: the poet is not simply a sort of officiating celebrator, but while still partly maintaining that position he also furnishes a more concrete suggestion of individuality and of individual drama, and a more immediately human reference to a cultural tradition very personally experienced, indeed even to a social and episodic context. It is extremely difficult to make this kind of poetry a success. The uniquely successful example I have in mind is Foscolo's *Dei sepolcri* (1807), a very compact poem of 295 unrhymed eleven-syllable lines, to Italians one of the most famous in the language and generally one of the most difficult.

How is a balance achieved here between the official and the personal, the public and the intimate? The poet's voice is, to a considerable extent, one of eloquent commemoration and exhortation; but at the same time we see that the poem exists also as a different kind of expression—as the personal musing, as the familiar address to a friend. If we should force it into a formula, we might say that the poem introduces the manner of the poetic epistle into a tissue largely woven out of "Romantic" materials and that the most prominent among these are in the traditions of Night Poetry, of Cultural Patriotism, and of Romantic Hellenism.

The main scene and the principal sources of the imagery are the burial ground, the sepulcher, the urn, the emblems in which the living preserve and honor the memory of the dead. The commemorative function of those objects is, in the end, identified with that of the poet as *vates*, for the

poem is not only in the *vates* tradition, it is also *about* it: poetry establishes, and preserves for posterity, the memory of the great. The conventions of graveyard poetry are thus associated with the time-honored concept of the poet as preserver and solemnizer of the memories of heroes. It is not particularly frivolous to say that the poem suggests the image of a classical urn on a background of Romantic darkness. The image in which the central theme of the poem is most concisely stated (" . . . le Muse . . Siedon custodi de' sepolcri,") suggests almost inevitably a neo-classic marble group, in so far as poetry can ever usefully recall sculpture. This aspect of the poem seems to justify the passages of high and solemn eloquence, the elaborate constructions, the Latinisms. All this, however, is constantly interwoven with other aspects and tones—that of personal meditation, that of the familiar address, and finally that of concretely "civic" poetry, *poesia civile*. The image of the poet himself corresponds to an image of the Nation both as idealized myth and as individual experience in a defined historical and social setting. The shifts are worked out in various ways, of which a brief survey of the poem may give some idea.

The most immediate and localized elements are provided by the event which has given the poem its practical occasion. A decree, intended to place cemeteries out of the cities and to control the custom of inscriptions on graves, has been taken by the poet to signify decay of communal reverence toward the dead and of ritual piety. In so far as he claims that motif as his starting point (it becomes rather secondary in the actual working of the poem) the poet assumes his first rôle, indicating that he possesses certain practical "civic" connections and interests and singling himself out as the defender of higher values against the present rulers of his society. In fact the poem opens when that "occasion" has already given precedence to the more general meditation on death, and on the value of the "illusion" of graves "confortate di pianto." But the opening has also the function of preparing for a more effective introduction of the "occasional" argument.

The initial points of the poem are largely made through questions, partly rhetorical, aligned almost as variations and amplifications on the theme proposed by the first one —proposed, one would almost say, scholastically, as though to be debated and elaborated on by what will follow, in logical progression:

All'ombra dei cipressi e dentro l'urne
Confortate di pianto è forse il sonno
Della morte men duro?

There is the tone of solemn meditation on death, but it goes along with that of the familiar poetic musing addressed to a friend — a fellow-poet, Ippolito Pindemonte. So the questions acquire a conversational quality, the address is almost an exchange:

Qual fia ristoro a' dì perduti un sasso
Che distingua le mie dalle infinite
Ossa che in terra e in mar semina morte?
Vero è ben, Pindemonte . . .

The tone of the relationship existing between the two friends ("Né da te, dolce amico, udrò piú il verso / E la mesta armonia che lo governa . . .") aptly prepares us to the nature of the point which is finally made —the persistence of similar communions in friendship after death —a point which is developed in the lofty passage concluding what we may consider the first section of the poem (to line 50).

A second section can be singled out, comprising lines 51-151. After the general argumentative introduction has established the theme of the "corrispondenza" between the dead and the living as the humans' "celeste dote," the oration, as it were, starts on its specific business. The "new law" on cemeteries is briefly mentioned at the start; then with an immediate transition, which is typical of the rather "telescoped" quality of the whole work, the unlamented grave of the poet Giuseppe Parini is given as instance of present abandonment and oblivion. It also occasions a passage in the moonlight-horror variety of Ro-

mantic night poetry, in a landscape of crosses "sparse per la funerea campagna," in the abandoned forgotten cemeteries where the hungry dog wanders. In contrast, a passage follows where the pious customs, the beliefs, the superstitions connected with burials are rehearsed. There may be a tone of eighteenth-century didacticism but it is tempered by the fact that those elements have an obvious function in the general pattern of the poem. Concreteness is maintained also through frequent transition from the general to the particular, and through shifts in the sharpness of vision and in verbal tenses (" . . . nè le città *fur* meste/ D'effigiati scheletri; le madri / *Balzan* nè sonni esterrefatte . . .").

Through such shifts the poem progresses even grammatically toward the suggestion that the poet's outlook is above time; there is a great fluidity in time levels; the scope of the poem and the outlook of the speaker are progressively and imperceptibly widened.

Le fontane versando acque lustrali
Amaranti educavano e viole
Sulla funebre zolla; e chi sedea
A libar latte e a raccontar sue pene
Ai cari estinti, una fragranza intorno
Sentia, qual d'aria de' beati Elisi.
Pietosa insania, che fa cari gli orti
De' suburbani avelli alle britanne
Vergini, dove le conduce amore
Della perduta madre . . .

Here, for example, the archaic motifs introduced by the enumeration of burial customs are so completely fused with contemporary scenes that the disregard for the time element may be said to amount to a method.

Firmly placed in the present tense is only the vision of the ruling society against which the poet addresses his most polemical passage. This is at the end of the second section (137-150): the rôle he assumes here is that of the poet-citizen, deprecating the false values of a governing class whose "ministri" are "l'opulenza e il tremore" and whose cult of the dead is cold ostentation. He sets him-

self against that vain pomp and deceitful stability; in contrast to them, throughout the poem — much in the tradition of Romantic patriotism where the pattern of exile is typical — he describes himself as “fuggitivo,” his life as “raminga,” so that the prospect of his own death and burial is given on some such implicit premise as “if ever Fortune grant me any repose;” and, explicitly, his only legacy to his fellow-souls is not going to be vain treasures but passionately and freely conceived poetry (“Non di tesori eredità, ma caldi / Sensi e di liberal carne l’esempio.”)

The not uncommon Romantic attitude of “looking forward to one’s own death” had already made its appearance in the introductory section of the poem (“ . . . un sasso / Che distingue le *mie* dalle infinite / Ossa . . . ”); now that theme reappears in a more solemn and public connection, the stress being on the example and the message left after death.

The transition from this point is naturally to the section (151-197) where the poet assumes the function of the communal celebrator of heroes and evokes the memories of some of the country’s great men of the past through the vision of their tombs in the church of the Holy Cross, in Florence; the fact that he proposes their examples immediately after having looked forward to establishing his own, is, of course, significant. Rhetorically, the fact that the great dead (Machiavelli, Michelangelo, Galileo) are not named but indicated through elaborate though concise circumlocution (a method not infrequent in Dante, in fact used here by Foscolo also in his allusion to Dante himself and to Petrarch) may represent the kind of artifice considered appropriate to the high occasion, but may also suggest the convention of the *vates* whose message is veiled in riddle.

The experience, however, is made familiar by an intense awareness of the scene, particularly the characterization of the landscape surrounding the city, the moonlit hills, the “convalli / Popolate di case e d’oliveti.” The vision is limited in space though not in time; this is a passage of “civic” poetry also in the sense that it directly cele-

brates the city. However, the status of the poet is still that of solitary wanderer and exile; he communes, in the city, only with the dead (while the city with which he deals in the living present, Milan, is "D'evirati cantori allettatrice"). His exclusive communion with the dead is brought out with particular sharpness as he recalls the image of his own more direct inspirer, Vittorio Alfieri, and some sort of identification between that noble and pale wanderer and himself is implicit:

. . . errava muto
Ove Arno è piú deserto, i campi e il cielo
Desioso mirando; e, poi che nullo
Vivente aspetto gli molcea la cura,
Qui posava l'austero e avea sul volto
Il pallor della morte e la speranza.

The memory of the poet Alfieri is proposed as the epitome of passionate allegiance to country. At that point the most sudden transition in the poem occurs. The passion is a *numen* (a variation on the *genius* motif) speaking to the present poet from the "religiosa pace" of the grave; and the idea that this was the same spirit which inspired the "virtue and wrath" of the Greeks at Marathon, in itself possibly a commonplace of patriotic poetry, is introduced, as it were, in mid-speech, without any signpost but the plainest conjunction:

Ah sì! da quella
Religiosa pace un Nume parla;
E nutria contro a' Persi, in Maratona,
Ove Atene sacrò tombe ai suoi prodi
La virtù greca e l'ira.

The effect of the sudden transition, of course, is to suggest identity between the present and the remotely past. From here to the end, the scene of the poem is occupied entirely by the world of ancient Greece and mythology. To simplify matters we may say that the earlier part of the poem is the more localized and time-bound and that it widens its scope as it progresses. The treatment of Greek

and mythological material cannot be analyzed in detail here; but I shall try to mention some of the ways in which the general unity of tone of the whole poem is achieved and to see how the image of the *vates* is established in various guises and provides the dominating point of view. ([†])

The shift in time had been obviously prepared by many previous allusions; for instance, in the "didactic" section of the poem we saw archaic elements used not as decorative reference but as present, operating forces. The poet, as it were, lived not only by present-day codes but by ancient ones as well, as he alluded to Hope "ultima dea," to "templi acherontei," to "aura de' beati Elisi," etc. Along that line, we have now a sort of formal adoption of the rôle of the officiating *vates*:

. . . Me ad evocar gli eroi chiamin le Muse
Del mortale pensiero animatrici.

The function of the poet becomes the imaginative realization of a tradition; and his poetry does not align and describe the materials of that tradition but rather dramatizes the experience, the awareness of it. For example, we have a re-introduction of the early mode of address to a friend, now mentioned by his Greek first name in an aura of almost mythical voyage:

Felice te che il regno ampio de' venti,
Ippolito, a' tuoi verdi anni correvi,
E se il pilota ti drizzò l'antenna
Oltre l'isole egee, d'antichi fatti
Certo udisti suonar dell'Ellesponto
i liti . . .

([†]) An interesting way to analyze the unity and coherence of the poem would also be, of course, to inspect its recurrent imagery, particularly plants and water. Plants are used in a way that I would tentatively describe as "ritualized Nature" while there is analogy between the "acque lustrali" shed on the "funebre zolla" and the tears shed upon graves to confer ritualistically upon them the lasting life of commemoration—all variations on the theme announced at the very opening with the proverbial "ombra dei cipressi" and the ". . . urne / Confortate di pianto."

The myth, rehearsed together, as it were, by the two friends, is seen in the atmosphere of familiar devotion and ardent piety of which not only the half-Greek Foscolo but other poets too were well capable. (I think it was Alfieri who said once that the very mention of the name Agamemnon made him weep.) The concreteness of the ancient vision is obtained here also through concentration on specific place, figures and moments of action. The place (lines 235 ff.) is the "Troade inseminata;" it is, according to pattern, the place consecrated to memory of high deeds, the burial ground now deserted except for "peregrini" seeking the relics of Trojan sepulchers —corresponding evidently, at the level of myth, to the Florentine graves of the earlier section. A great deal of action has to be telescoped into the passage and this is done by introducing the figure and the voice of Cassandra and by giving action by way of prophecy. She becomes, we may say, one version of the *vates* image. And her prophecy of the fate of the Trojan heroes is made in terms of the basic themes of exile, of lamented servitude, and of nobility in defeat, developing more or less the idea, "If you ever will come back from wandering and bondage to your city, it will be only burning ruins, but the proud graves will stand," for "de' Numi è dono servir nelle sventure altero nome."

Cassandra also resumes in this new light some of the motifs which we have seen in the "didactic" section: ". . e chi la scure / Asterrà pio dalle devote frondi / Men si dorrà di consanguinei lutti / E santamente toccherà l'altare." In this atmosphere of archaic codes and beliefs, of ritualistic gestures performed on graves, the poet introduces the concluding image of the *vates*, the vision of Homer himself shown in an act at once specific and symbolic, blind, descending into the graves to seek the urns of the heroes, gathering the story of Ilium, "Placando quelle afflitte alme col canto."

It would probably be difficult to give a precise conceptual meaning to the image of the souls of the heroes being "placated" by the poet's song: but undoubtedly, in the present contexts, it indicates that moment, in the vision of

human affairs, in which harmony (the "armonia" which "vince di mille secoli il silenzio") has been achieved—in which poetic contemplation is possible. And the possibility for human affairs to become the object of that contemplation is a test of their greatness. Homer then represents the final version of the *vates* image; and his outlook, though prepared by the general direction of the poem, provides its comprehensive and transcendent conclusion. The idea of the *patria* transcends that of any historical country and generally symbolizes the object of allegiance, the motive of lives significantly lived, whether in triumph or in defeat. A key-word, an adjective which seems singularly well placed to express that outlook is *fatati*: the final destroyers of Ilium are the carriers of fate and are themselves fated, they are gathering their "ultimo trofeo" in glory and calamity. Although the sympathy may go, as usual, to the defeated Trojans (the Romantic patriotic hero is Hector) the point of view of the "sacro vate" is above both.

Consequently the final impression left by the poem as expression of "patriotic Romanticism" is that its *patria* is a cultural *contaminatio*, in fact, an "invention." Looking back at the whole poem we realize that the poet has attempted, with a conciseness probably unparalleled in the period, and in terms of the special taste, the cultural training, and the sensibility that were his own, to perform a synthesis which in very different ways presents itself in literary history when a conciliation is attempted between the personal, the "civic" and the mythical.

Foscolo's Sepulchers

Translated by JOSEPH TUSIANI

Beneath a cypress shade or in an urn
Tear-comforted, is death's eternal sleep
Less grievous? When no more for me the sun
Shall make this happy family of plants
And creatures teem with life, and when no more
In luring sound of joy the future hours
Shall dance ahead of me, and when no longer,
O my sweet friend, shall I expect to hear
The melancholy music of your verse,
Nor shall again be eloquent in me
The soul of love and of the virgin Muses, —
The only soul of my wandering life:
How, then, will a cold stone console my days
Forever lost, by marking out my bones
From the infinite ones the hand of death
Sows, merciless, on lands and into seas?
It is true, Pindemonte! Even Hope,
The last of goddesses, abhors the tomb;
And oblivion wraps into its night
All things that are, and a perennial force
Wears them from motion ever into motion;
And time disguises man and tomb and form
And all the relics of both land and sky.

But why, before time done, must mortal man
Sever the sweet illusion from his heart
That keeps him, though extinguished unto life,
Still at the door of Dis? Is he not still
Alive when the day's harmony is spent,
If he with tender cares rekindles it
In those he left above? From heaven comes
This interchange of love remembering,—

Celestial gift to us: and we for it
Live with our friend departed, he with us,
If the same earth that took him as a child
And nourished him, in her maternal lap
Sheltering him at last, saves his remains
From sneer of storm and of profaning foot,
And only if a stone still keeps his name,
And a tree, fragrant with familiar blooms,
Comforts his ashes in its restful shade.

Only the man who leaves no pledge of love
Finds in his urn no joy; and when he broods
On what remains beyond his funeral,
He sees his spirit wander through the tears
Of Acheron's sad temples, or seek refuge
Under the ample wings of God's forgiveness:
But to the nettles of some desert land
He leaves his dust on which no woman's love
Shall pray, and where no lonely traveller
Shall ever hear the sigh that Nature sends
Out of each tomb to the still-living man.

Yet a new law today rules all tombs out
Of all pitying eyes, and from the dead
Snatches the name. Ah, with no tomb, Thalia,
Now lies your priest who, in his humble home,
With lasting love twined laurel wreaths for you,
And with your laughter you adorned his song,
And his song pierced Sardanapalus' heart
Who only loves a sound of cattle coming
Up from the Alduan stalls and from Ticino
And making him a lord of feast and ease.
Beautiful Muse, where are you? Sweet ambrosia,
The sign of your warm presence, I can scent
No more among these plants where I must sit
And sigh forever for my mother's house.
Here, it was here you came and smiled at him
Beneath that linden which, with downcast boughs,
Is shivering now for it no more can shelter
The old man's urn, to whom it once was kind

With calm and shade. Are you, O goddess, looking
About and still about for some lone spot
Where sleeps the sacred head of your Parini?
The city, — that lascivious whore alluring
Within its walls emasculated singers, —
Could give to him no shade, no word, no stone;
And now perhaps, with his head tumbling down,
A thief who on the scaffold left his crimes
Has stained the poet's guiltless bones with blood.
Hush! Scraping in the bushes and the rubble
A bitch, astray and hungry, now is howling
From tomb to tomb in the night, and the moon
Chases the gloomy hoopoe from a skull,
And two lugubrious wings soon brush the roods
Through the funereal field, and a cry dooms
The light which all the stars in pity shed
Over forgotten graves. In vain, O goddess,
You now invoke from the desolate night
A grace of dew over your poet lost.
Over the dead, alas, no flowers bloom
Unless man's praises and love's tears surround them.

Since marriage and law courts and holy altars
Bade all the human animals be kind
To others and themselves, the living rescued
From the malignant air and from the beasts
The sad remains which Nature, in its cycle
Eternal, destines for new goals and ends.
To man's great deeds the tombs were witnesses,
And for his children, altars: only there
The questioned gods gave answers, and the oath
Sworn on the parents' dust was sacred awe,—
A religion, all this, which fatherland
And family through centuries of fate
Brought down to us. Not always were the tombs
Grim floors to churches, nor, with incense mixed,
Did stench of corpses soil the praying crowd;
Nor were the cities sad with skeletons
Painted about: all mothers, terrified,

Start in their sleep and stretch their naked arms
Over a darling infant, to dispel
From its ear and its dream the long lament
Of some dead person asking of his heir
The alms of one more prayer from the temple.
But cypresses and cedars all around,
Charging the breeze with fragrances of youth,
Stretched out perennial green over the urns
As in perennial memory, and votive
Vases held all the sacrificial tears.
Friends stole a spark from the supernal sun
To light with it the subterranean dark,
For ah, man's dying glances seek the sun,
And every fading life sends its last sigh
To the fast-running splendor. Fountains, there,
Gushing their cleansing waters, gave fresh life
To amaranths and violets encircling
Sweetly the grave, and he who sat thereon,
Telling the dead his aches, and pouring milk,
Sensed a pure scent about him, as a breath
Of blest Elysium. Such tender folly
Endears the gardens of suburban graveyards
To British girls, whom love for dead mother
Calls there, where once they prayed with anguished cry
For the return of him who from the mast
Of the ship vanquished had his coffin made.
But where man's passion of bright deeds is spent,
And only ministers of civil life
Are opulence and terror, there in vain
Stelae and marble monuments are raised,—
Mammon's unholy travesty and sham.
Ah dead,—the learned, rich, and noble throng,
The pride and mind of Italy's fair realm,
Are dead, though living still; a flattered court
Is sepulcher to them, and their one fame
Is their escutcheon. But for us let Death
Prepare a tranquil home when fate at last
Has stopped its vengeance, and let friendship reap
No treasure of inheritance but feelings

Of warmth, examples of undaunted song.

To noble deeds the urns of all the Great,
O Pindemonte, kindle a great soul,
And make the land that has them, fair and holy
To pilgrims. When I saw the monument
Wherein the body lies of that great man
Who, strengthening the sceptre of all rulers,
Stripped it of laurels and made people see
The tears and blood with which it drips forever;
And the tomb of the one who raised in Rome
A new Olympus to the gods; and that
Of the other who saw beneath the sky
More worlds wheel fast and, motionless, the sun
Shed light upon them (it was he who cleared
Wide heavens for the Englishman to soar):
O blessed city, I cried out, for all
Your happy breezes teeming with new life,
And for the streams the Apennine pours down
From its green crests to you! Proud of your air,
The moon is mantling with its whitest light
Your hills; and all about, the valleys, strewn
With olive groves and houses, send to heaven
A thousand happy fragrances of blooms.

And you, O Florence, were the first to heed
The song that soothed the angry Ghibelline,
Fleeing about; and it was you who gave
Parents and idiom to that sweet-sounding
Lip-of-Calliope who, finding Love
Naked in Greece and Rome, adorned him first
With a white veil, then placed him on the lap
Of Heavenly Venus. But more blessed you are
For it is you who keep, safe in one temple,
Italy's glories, —our one glory left
Since the ill-guarded Alps and the swift-changing
Omnipotence of fate swept all we had—
Weapons and wealth and native land and altars
And, save our sad remembrance, everything.
For, should once more some hope of glory shine

On daring minds and thus on Italy,
From these our tombs we shall draw auguries.
And to these marble sepulchers Vittorio
Came oftentimes to gladden his sad heart.
Angry with all his country's gods, alone
And silent he would wander where the Arno
Is barren most, questioning fields and skies,
And as no living sight could comfort him,
Here that austere man rested, and his face
Was lit with hope, though pale as death itself:
Now with these Great he, too, eternal lives,
And his bones throb with love of fatherland.
Ah, from that sacred peace a god is speaking:
At Marathon, where Athens raised bright tombs
To all her brave, he fed against the Persians
The wrathful heart of Greece. Through the vast night
The sailor, coasting the Euboean land,
Saw sparks flash off from helmets and swords crashing,
And smoky reek of pyres, and, coruscant
In all their steely weapons, phantom soldiers
Seek out the battle once again, while, fierce,
Along the fields in the funereal calm
A din of passing phalanxes spread out,
And sounds of trumpets, and sudden onrushing
Of running horses trotting trampling over
The helmets of the dying, and loud songs,
And sobs, and everywhere the singing Fates.

O happy you, Ippolito, who crossed
In your green years the ample reign of the winds!
And if the helmsman steered the running ship
Past the Aegean Isles, you doubtless heard
The Hellespont resound from shore to shore,
And the tide roar as it was taking back
Achilles' arms up to the tomb of Ajax
On the Retean beaches: death alone
Is just in giving glory to the just;
Nor could sly wisdom, nor accord of kings,
Allow the man from Ithaca to keep

The spoils, hard-conquered, of his victory,
For a wave roused by the infernal gods
Snatched them away from his wandering bark.

Now me, whom grievous times and wish for honour
Make roam from land to land,—ah let the Muses,
Only revivers of man's mortal thought,
Call *me* to sing all heroes. They sit, still,
Watching over their sepulchers, and when
Time sweeps with its cold wing earth's ruins too,
They, the Pimplean sisters, with their song
Make deserts joyous, and their harmony
Conquers the silence of a million years.

Now, in the unsown Troad, shines a place
Forever living to the pilgrims' eyes,—
A place eternal for the Nymph whom Jove
Made his, and she to him bore Dardanus,
A son, and came from him Assaracus,
And Troy, the fifty bridal beds, and, last,
The Giulian people and their reign. As soon
As she, Electra, heard death calling her
From the dear murmur of the living day
To the Elysian song, to Jove she sent
Her final prayer, and she said: 'if ever
My tresses and my eyes and our sweet nights
Were dear to you, and if no better boon
Can I be granted by the Fates' decree,
From heaven at least remember your dead friend
So that the fame of your Electra live.'
So praying, she was dead; and her death made
The great Olympian weep: with his immortal
Head he agreed and, as he nodded, rained
Ambrosia from its locks upon the Nymph
And made her body sacred in her tomb.
There Erichtonius rests, and there now sleeps
The pious ash of Ilus; there the women
Of Ilium unbound their hair, in vain
Begging relentless fate to spare their men;
And there Cassandra came, her heart possessed

By the inspiring god who made her see
The mortal hour of Troy. A song of love
Into the shades she sang as she preceded
Her nephews to the dance, and to those youths
She taught her loving dirge. She sighed and said:
If heaven ever grants you to return
From Argos where you, ah, shall graze the horses
Of both Tydides and Laertes' son,
In vain you shall seek out your native land.
The walls, the work of Phoebus, will be smoking
Beneath their very ruins. But the gods
Of Troy within these tombs shall still remain,
For it is gift from heaven to possess
A glorious name even in misery.
And you, O palms and cypresses, which now
Are being planted by the joyous hands
Of Priam's daughters, and are soon to grow,
Watered, alas, by widows' tears, protect
My ancestors: and he who keeps his axe
From these religious leaves will suffer less
From family bereavement, and will come
To touch the altar with a guiltless hand.
Protect my ancestors. You will one day
See a blind beggar wander under your
Most ancient shades, and enter, groping, into
The burial place, and soon embrace the urns,
And question them. The secret caves will moan,
And each tomb tell of Ilium, twice razed
And twice arisen splendidly above
The silent avenues so as to make
More beautiful to all the fateful sons
Of Peleus their last trophy. Soothing those
Sad, weary souls with song, the sacred bard
Will give the Argive kings eternity
Throughout the lands great father Ocean holds.
But you, O Hector, shall forever have
Honour of tears from men who deem most holy
The blood shed for one's country, and as long
As the sun shine upon man's tragedy.

The Fulbright Program in Italy

CIPRIANA SCELBA

[Miss Cipriana Scelba is the Associate Director of the American Commission for Cultural Exchange with Italy. She lives in Rome where she was born. She is a graduate of the Law School of the University of Rome. Miss Scelba has been with the Commission since its founding and is eminently qualified to discuss the Fulbright program in Italy. The Commission is binational in character, consisting of six Italian and six American members appointed by their respective governments, and it is called the American Commission for Cultural Exchange with Italy. This body administers the Fulbright Program in Italy with the cooperation of the Italian Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Public Instruction and under the guidance of the Department of State and of the Board of Foreign Scholarships.]

In September-October 1949, the first American and Italian holders of the scholarships which were later to be known in all continents as Fulbright Grants crossed the ocean in opposite directions to undertake "studies, research, instruction and other educational activities," according to the letter of the Fulbright Act and of the Agreement between the United States and Italy.

According to both the letter and the spirit of the same documents, they were to "promote further mutual understanding between the peoples of the United States of America and of Italy by a wider exchange of knowledge and professional talents."

At that time few Italians or Americans knew exactly the scope and the implications of this program, and we at the Commission were just as inexperienced as the institutions and organizations whose cooperation we sought. Today we are unable to say whether we expected that in ten years the most important American and Italian magazines would carry lengthy stories on the Fulbright Program, or use such neologisms as "Fulbrights," "Fulbrighters" or even "Fulbrighting" as terms of general reference. We probably

did not anticipate that there would be "Fulbright jokes" and that a leading Rome daily, in commenting on Senator Fulbright's appointment as Chairman of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee in a 2000-word article would identify him for the public as the political leader whose "name persists in the memory of thousands of students, American and European, and is tied to the creation of those scholarships which transformed surplus war instruments into travels and studies abroad on both sides of the ocean." We did expect however, to see the names of former grantees on the title pages of books, at the bottom of articles and essays, on concert programs or in the catalogs of exhibitions, and to read of their post-grant achievements in newspapers and journals. And indeed our rosier forecasts came true.

Time and again America's literary or artistic achievements, her political and economic problems, her social structure, her government and her history, her outlook and philosophy, are discussed analyzed and illustrated in leading Italian journals by former Italian Fulbright grantees. Likewise I often run into the names of former American grantees when reading through American periodicals that carry articles on Italian culture or events.

Last spring, the Vienna Opera Company appeared at the Rome Opera House in the *Magic Flute*. The leading soprano was a Fulbright grantee of six years ago. Anna Moffo was another Fulbright singer three years ago. She has since appeared in many prominent roles on the Italian television, at the Rome Opera House, at La Scala in Milan, and in other European theaters, receiving enthusiastic reviews. Recently she successfully played the title role in *La Traviata* at the Metropolitan in New York, and *Time* magazine as well as the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune* carried extensive appraisals of her performance. Not quite a month ago, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington presented a recital by two soloists, a violist and a pianist, who had studied in Italy on Fulbright grants. The concert was most favorably reviewed in the *Washington Star* which defined it "a first rate recital;" but the interesting features were that the violist was reported as being

one of the few experts in "viola d'amore," which he had learned in Italy, and that one of the pieces was by an almost unknown 18th century Italian composer. The number of little-known composers or of little-known works by famous Italian composers unearthed by American musicologists on Fulbright grants, and performed for the first time through their efforts, is constantly rising. The June 23rd issue of the *Reporter* devoted an article to an American Fulbright student, a woman, who "has exhumed many forgotten (Carlo) Gesualdo scores from Italian archives," and had them performed and recorded. We all remember the local newspaper stories about her when she visited archives in various Italian cities, and especially on the occasion of her visit to a monastery in a small Southern Italian town.

Two large traveling exhibits sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute have recently toured the United States to present paintings and sculptures as well as graphic works by sixty artists who have had Fulbright grants for study abroad during the past ten years. Thirty-five of these artists held their grants in Italy. Likewise, the catalogues of the last two *Biennale di Venezia* included the names of five American Fulbright artists. Those who have read the *Washington Post* during the past academic year, or who in 1955-57 listened to any of the fifty stations of the National Association of Education Broadcasters, will have gleaned much accurate, impartial and enlightening information about the Italian political, economic, social, and cultural scene, from the stories by two brilliant newspapermen who were in Italy to cooperate with schools of journalism and do research on educational radio programs. A few months ago, an issue of the widely circulating weekly *L'Espresso* carried an article by a former Italian grantee on a social investigation conducted by an American grantee in a small Tuscan town on the use and effect of visual mass media.

Last year the medical section of an issue of *Time* magazine was devoted to a difficult operation on a child in the United States performed by an Italian Fulbright grantee using a new technique developed jointly by him and his American supervisor. The directors of the Italian

graduate schools of business administration in Turin and in Palermo are former Fulbright students. Two of the best known young Italian stage directors had Fulbright grants in the United States. An Italian teacher who studied educational television programs in the United States now directs *Telescuola*, the Italian T.V. program for schools.

Two isotope units, a blood transfusion center, a haematologic laboratory, and a plastic surgery center, are among the accomplishments of former Italian medical grantees upon their return home. Many American students and scholars who have spent their orientation period in Perugia, have also profited from the medical skill of two former Italian grantees, each of whom, during the first year after his return home, offered free medical assistance to all grantees assembled in Perugia. The former grantees who hold significant positions in the universities, in the professions, or in cultural circles in Italy and in the United States are many. Suffice it to mention such names as that of the recent Nobel Prize winner Emilio Segrè, the art critic and historian Lionello Venturi, the Italian composer Luigi Dallapiccola, the geneticist Adriano Buzzati Traverso, the poet Theodore Roethke, and the American political scientist Mario Einaudi, son of the former President of the Italian Republic. To these we should add many other professors and cultural leaders who, though not holding Fulbright grants, have been most generous with their time and advice, acting as counselors for students, as sources of information or social contacts for colleagues, and as experts and consultants for the Commission. Benedetto Croce can be included in this group: not only did he recommend certain Italian graduate students for fellowships, but he also guided the work of an American student grantee and recommended him for a renewal. On another occasion he reviewed some essays on Vico by an American philosopher who also held a Fulbright grant. Bernard Berenson, too, was most kind to Fulbright visitors; while much has been done for Italian Fulbright students by prominent political, literary, and artistic figures in the United States.

The foregoing few examples chosen at random show

that the Fulbright program touches upon the most important aspects of contemporary culture and life, although it is essentially an academic program whose participants are students, teachers, professors, or professional people with educational pursuits that must be carried out under the sponsorship of educational institutions. It is not a technical-assistance nor a generally "cultural" program. Its immediate or more often long-range consequences, however, are seen or felt in all areas of human endeavor. One should also consider that each grant is somewhat like a stone thrown into a lake whose ripples extend beyond the place it fell. Aside from the lectures, the writings, the places visited, the contacts established, many former grantees become centers of activities and, so to speak, creators of more grantees. We thus have laboratories and institutes which by tradition are hosts to an American or Italian grantee each year. Students and scholars are encouraged to apply by their teachers or colleagues who already participated in the program. Lasting exchanges are established between an Italian and an American university department owing to personal relations initiated when the first grantee and his host met. This type of cooperation varies from brief specific research projects to long-range programs.

This is not an office report; therefore it will not contain charts or statistical tables. Since, however, statistics at times help in giving an idea of the size and impact of an event or program, a few figures are offered here: 1454 Americans and 1364 Italians received Fulbright grants between September 1949 and July 1959. Approximately 1200 published writings (articles, essays, monographs, and books) and 700 lectures (exclusive of regular courses of instruction) by holders of Fulbright grants are on record with the Commission. Keeping in mind that highly specialized scientific papers, unless called to the attention of the Commission officers, would by their very nature escape its notice, and that in any case the Commission has no systematic recording procedure for such matters, it is safe to assume that these figures are smaller than those which would be revealed by an exhaustive survey.

Exhibitions by Fulbright artists and concerts by Fulbright musicians total respectively 40 and 120, but again these figures have no claim to more than reasonable approximation.

If the Commission were a simple grant-issuing mechanism, the above data and a few more details of a similar nature might cover the subject of this writing. As we of the Commission for Cultural Exchange see it, however, the basic and characteristic components of this program are the human element and the cultural-professional element. With regard to the former, each of the 2818 Fulbright grantees, while constituting a "file entry" for working purposes, is primarily an individual with a personality, with his own activities, aspirations, ideas, and talents, and whose particular history at a given moment crosses, so to speak, the orbit of the Fulbright Program and helps to shape it. Rather than an arithmetical sum of scholarships, the program is an articulated plan for the gradual development of certain mutually worthwhile cultural and scholarly projects into which the holders of grants will fit.

In this connection we felt that we had an important task and an excellent tool with which to accomplish it. In the first place we set out to examine the general cultural, educational, and scientific interests and needs for both countries. Once we had established the prevailing trends, we evaluated them in terms of their ability to reach the long-range objective of "mutual understanding . . . by . . . exchange of knowledge and professional talents."

In 1949 the countries of Europe, all deeply scarred by the recent war, shared certain ideals and values in common among themselves and with the United States. They thought of America as a wealthy country, highly advanced in science and technology, which had produced the atomic bomb and was willing to give economic assistance to the nations overseas which were painfully getting back on their feet. In cultural and professional terms, this meant that American help would consist in training as many European physicists, engineers, and technicians as possible and in providing technical advice. At any rate, even apart from the war, this

was the traditional point of view of Europeans: they credited Americans with great technical and scientific advancements, but negligible contributions in artistic, humanistic, or generally cultural fields; they thought of them as materialists. The Americans, influenced by reports from their fellow-countrymen who had been to Europe as pre-war tourists or with the American army during the war, had an idea of Europe and especially of the Latin countries as of wonderful places where beauty, art, and intelligence blossomed at every street corner, but which belonged to the stone age so far as modern technical and scientific life was concerned — as quite unreliable and inefficient.

We disliked this stereotyped and manichaeistic vision of two civilizations. In this we were supported by a very small group of Italians and Americans who, having acquired a thorough knowledge and understanding of both countries, knew better. We decided that since we were not a technical or social assistance agency but an organization administering cultural academic exchanges with the purpose, as set forth in its constitution, of promoting mutual understanding, we should in the first place attempt to correct this widespread superficial opinion. "Correct," however, is not the appropriate term, for it implies the existence of a missionary spirit striving towards certain results on the basis of ideas which might be as preconceived as those to be corrected. To adopt the frame of reference of scientific research, I should rather say that, having a hypothesis, we wanted to test its soundness. And we had excellent means and conditions to carry out the test with all the desirable objectivity. In fact we were able to send a fairly large number of persons who could observe the true American or Italian reality and values directly and not through others or through the press or the films. Other basic requirements of the Fulbright program allowed us to create the best possible situation for such observation. The period spent in the other country had to be relatively long, and visitors were expected to have or to acquire proficiency in the host country's language. These two requirements helped to prevent hurried, inaccurate, and superficial evaluations or mis-

conceptions. Furthermore, the system through which participants were chosen, namely national public competitions, enabled us to find best-qualified and most suitable persons. We could thus insure the presence of certain essential factors, such as the real interest of the participants—who had to go through a long application procedure—their professional, cultural, and intellectual caliber; and their breadth of interests and adaptability, as assessed through a careful screening process.

While proposing to pursue this goal, however, we also wanted the advice, suggestions, and constructive criticism of Italian and American cultural and academic circles in order to be sure that we would develop a program based on deeply-felt educational needs and interests and not an abstract plan reflecting the pet ideas of a restricted group of administrators. We also noted the areas of concentration of other existing private or public exchange programs, in order not to duplicate their efforts. This study revealed, for instance, that many more opportunities were available to Americans wishing to come to Italy to follow humanistic or artistic pursuits than for other purposes, and that Italians too could benefit from more abundant offerings for study and research in the United States in the scientific and technical fields. The Commission felt that it could devote itself to its task of balancing the various areas of interest through gradual long-range action without prejudice to basic needs. The method adopted was that of never “imposing” a project, or initiating something that had not been at least vaguely suggested, but of encouraging certain initiatives and emphasizing certain results, while preserving maximum flexibility to provide for unforeseen developments or for worthwhile but unprogrammed projects. Each year the Commission prepares a budget and program based on these criteria.

When it came to considering specific subject areas in which the Commission felt that its action would be most beneficial, the first and most obvious field was naturally that of American studies in Italy and Italian studies in the United States, in the broadest sense, including American

and Italian language, literature, history, economy, political and social affairs, contemporary art, and philosophy.

An example of developments brought about by the Fulbright program and of the methods used is shown by the teaching of American literature in Italy. In 1949, if taught at all, this subject was only a part of courses in English literature. In 1952 the first course for credit in American literature was instituted at the University of Venice. Now there are courses for credit in American literature at eight Italian universities, and four more offer elective courses. With the exception of that in Venice, the establishment of regular courses in American literature was preceded by the activity of visiting Fulbright lecturers. In addition, the Commission has allocated many grants for Italian students of this subject, and has played a major role in making annual seminars in American literature possible. The student body of these seminars consists of graduating or graduate students from all Italian universities, and the faculty is formed of Fulbright lecturers and distinguished Italian specialists, many of whom are former holders of Fulbright grants.

The dollar shortage has prevented the Commission from adopting similar methods for the expansion of Italian studies in the United States. It has been impossible to place an even approximately corresponding number of Italian lecturers in American universities. However, much has been done through grants to American students and scholars for study in Italy and through special summer seminars for American secondary-school teachers of Italian and European history. As a result, the Commission has a record of over eighty publications written by American grantees, of many published translations and anthologies of contemporary Italian writers and poets, and knows of at least twenty former student grantees who now occupy teaching positions in American colleges and whose courses cover some aspect of Italian culture and civilization.

Another area in which exchanges promised to be mutually beneficial was that of education: this because of the vast reappraisal and experimentation now underway in both countries with regard to their respective educational systems

and methods. Thus a large elementary and secondary-school teacher exchange was initiated.

In the sciences, for the reasons, mentioned previously, the Commission had decided to make a most exclusive selection of projects. It adopted the criterion of choosing those in which Italian and American accomplishments could usefully complement each other. It favored those basic sciences in which Americans experience could best assist Italy in its present stage of development, and which (unlike technology and the applied sciences) did not enjoy large financial aid from government and private industry. The Commission thus concentrated on biology, zoology, physiology, neurology, mathematics, and nuclear physics, in which specialized research work carried out in certain Italian laboratories can be of great interest to American scientists, while at the same time the former can profit from the latter's contribution. With regard to nuclear physics, the flow of exchanges has been continuously rising: during the current academic year there are seven American physicists in Italian departments of physics and as many Italian researchers in America. Most of these grantees carry out a twofold program of lecturing and research. The great attractions in Italy for physicists at the present moment are the 1000 MeV National Synchrotrone Laboratory at Frascati, and the European proton synchrotron at ISPRA in the Milan area, in addition to certain researches in solid-state physics and photographic emulsion techniques.

As for the projects in which Italian research could best learn from American achievements, the Commission chose nuclear studies in medicine, agriculture, and genetics; physical medicine and rehabilitation techniques; genetics; electronics; and servomechanisms.

I would like to add a word or two on the Commission's efforts in the field of rehabilitation medicine. Seventeen Americans in this field came to Italy as visiting lecturers between 1949 and 1959, and helped to establish and develop departments of physical and occupational therapy and an appropriate teaching program at the Universities of Rome and Florence, and at the Istituto Neurologico di Milano.

The pilot project was established in 1949-50 at the Pediatric Clinic of the University of Florence. During recent years, the Commission's efforts have concentrated on the establishment and development of a regular two-year teaching program in physical and occupational therapy at the Clinic of Mental and Nervous Diseases of the University of Rome, with the hope that eventually they might grant a diploma which would be recognized by the international professional association. Last July, fourteen students took the final examinations with good results and prepared for a summer period of practical training. While the Commission, because of the nature of the program, has concerned itself with the educational aspect, the presence of American specialists and their efforts to increase awareness of the importance of rehabilitation among the general public has certainly helped to expedite the multiplication of treatment centers and to encourage private initiative.

Of the Italians who went to the United States for training in this field, one doctor became head of the School at the Rome University Clinic of Mental and Nervous Diseases, and has recently been appointed consultant on rehabilitation at the Ministry of Public Health. Another has been put in charge of the rehabilitation program in the Istituto Neurologico di Milano.

In the field of the social sciences, the Commission felt that it should assist Italian efforts to strengthen certain subjects which once played only a small part in the academic curricula, but had now become of major importance in the light of the present dynamic phase of Italian society. These subjects were sociology, social and industrial psychology, social work, business administration, public administration, and labor relations. The latter two subjects had always been part of the academic curricula, but were treated in the law schools at the theoretical level with little or no regard to the operational level. On the other hand, the practical application of new sociological, psychological, and welfare concepts and techniques was far ahead of their academic systematization. Since the United States had extensive experience with the teaching of these subjects, a long-

range plan of cooperation involving a number of Italian universities and schools of social work was established. Later the Commission added journalism to its areas of interest, and concentrated on sociology, psychology, and social work, since adequate assistance from other sources was becoming available in the other fields. Obviously, the activities of American scholars in all these fields have resulted in a vast production of interesting studies of Italian society, which, because of its variety, offers a fertile, little-explored territory for investigation.

Due consideration has also been given, of course, to the interests of American classicists, art historians, musicologists, medievalists, and historians, whose primary source material is in Italy, as well as to the needs of architects, artists, and musicians.

A very large continuing project, with whose results so far the Commission is quite pleased, is the development of modern English-teaching methods in Italy based on the most recent findings of descriptive linguistics. This project is conducted in cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Public Instruction, the United States Information Service in Italy, the *Facoltà di Magistero* of the University of Rome and an organization called the Council on American Studies. It has several facets, such as a series of city and regional seminars given by American Fulbright specialists for Italian teachers of English, an annual one-month national seminar of the same type, from six to ten grants for Italian teachers of English to participate in special workshops in the United States, and cooperation between these returned Italian teachers and the specialized American lecturing staff in experimenting with new methods and developing new teaching materials. Finally, a very interesting feature of this project is the placement of American secondary-school teachers in Italian secondary schools to give classes in oral English. This particular type of exchange has been growing more and more successful during the past few years and has enabled smaller Italian cities, which heretofore had been out of the current of Italian-American exchanges because they were not university towns, to come

in contact with American culture. These teachers, through their many extracurricular activities, have been the source of a wealth of first-hand information on American civilization and have created much good will. One outstanding example of their impact on a city community was the invitation extended last Spring by the Ente Provinciale per il Turismo of Reggio Emilia to all the American teachers then in Italy and their families. The Ente (the province's State Tourist Agency), with the cooperation of the city and of the local school district, offered a three-day weekend in the city with all expenses paid and with a program of visits, meetings and social functions. A total of twenty-two persons participated in this event.

Speaking of good will, I should recall the spontaneous foundation and now the active functioning of a "National Fulbright Association" with autonomous regional chapters, which groups together all the Italians who have been holders of Fulbright grants. The Association was founded in 1957 at an impressive congress attended by government authorities, and with enthusiastic messages from many Italian civic, business, and cultural leaders as well as from the Premier and various cabinet members.

In discussing the work of a ten-year project, one should consider not only achievements but also persistent problems.

One set of difficulties, which have not affected the success of the program because they were realized from the outset and counteracted with appropriate measures, stems from the great difference in philosophies and methods between the Italian and the American educational systems. Because of the more closely-knit and organized pattern of American universities, Italian students must fit into their pre-established programs and curricula and meet their requirements. This creates problems for the advanced graduate student who, though he wishes to take some courses, plans to devote most of his time to a specific research topic, without working towards a degree. In most cases the Commission can only help by giving careful guidance to the student as to how to formulate his study plan and to select,

if a choice is possible, the most suitable institution which will make allowance for his special needs; or, at a later stage, to inform the grantee accurately as to the American academic system, the conditions he will have to accept, and the officers with whom he should discuss his plans. The same type of counseling must also be offered to the American student who is apt to be bewildered by the seeming lack of organization in Italian universities, especially in the case of foreign students who spend only one year abroad and can therefore not be admitted as regular candidates for a degree. The Italian emphasis upon final examinations in general subject areas—although the course offerings are often extremely specialized and limited in scope—makes the adaptation of a young American student seeking classroom instruction such as is provided in American universities rather difficult. The pre-doctoral researcher, young professional man, or artist, will not find graduate schools into which to fit his post-graduate activities, and will be pretty much on his own. Thus the Commission has two tasks, according to the degree of advancement of the grantee: it must provide guidance for the younger college graduate, and it must prevent the scholarly isolation in libraries, museums, or their own homes or studios, of the advanced grantee engaged in a doctoral dissertation and the young professional. The fairly loose and flexible Italian academic pattern assists the Commission in this twofold task; so that it does not have to limit itself to warning American grantees of the existing conditions, but can also arrange special facilities according to their various needs. Thus the lack of foreign student advisors is compensated by the cordial and voluntary cooperation of Italian university assistants and tutors for the younger students; and of leading Italian professors, specialists, curators, librarians, artists, etc. as consultants for the advanced students or professionals. In some cases, such as those of singers and architects, elaborate special facilities have been arranged with the assistance of Italian institutions.

The language barrier is another difficulty. In the case of Italian students the demand for Fulbright grants

is so large that it is fairly easy to find an adequate number of academically qualified candidates with a sufficient command of English. This is not equally true of American student candidates. However, sufficient proficiency in Italian to make social intercourse possible as well as the pursuance of the study project, can be and generally is attained through the Commission's orientation and language refresher programs.

For the American teacher or lecturer, however, the situation is different. Here candidates are invited for specific assignments: they must possess a high degree of professional competence and personal adaptability in addition to a fairly fluent knowledge of the language. This combination is extremely rare. Furthermore, at times the American professors whose skills are suited to a given lecturing or consulting project have no personal or professional reasons to wish to spend a year in Italy. This fact, and the exacting nature of the requirements, accounts for the occasional failure of the Commission to reach some of its more ambitious targets.

The main limitations of the program, however, is the shortage of dollar funds for the support of the foreign participants in the United States. This limitation seems to affect Italian citizens more than those of some other countries, because the amount of private dollar support available for Italians is fairly small. This creates two problems: one is the quantity problem. Although the foregoing statistics show an imbalance of only 90 grants between Americans and Italians, the excess of American grants with respect to Italian is actually higher, because 143 of the Italian grants were for attendance at American institutions in Italy and not for study, lecturing, or research in the United States. Thus the difference over ten years between the number of Americans who have come to Italy and the number of Italians who have gone to the United States under the Fulbright program is 233. The other problem is of a more substantial nature: as mentioned earlier, the Commission tries to develop its exchanges in such a way as to encourage the more neglected studies and to attain a general balance

of subjects in the program. This it can do by specifically allocating grants for certain projects, and publicizing such opportunities. In the case of Italians, however, since it can only offer round-trip transportation, it can determine the balance of subjects only to the extent to which supplemental dollar funds are available for the pursuance of certain interests. And it is a well-known fact that money is more abundant in the scientific and technological fields than in the humanistic or artistic disciplines or the social sciences. Hence, few Italian artists, musicians, or art critics have been able to go to the United States under this program in spite of the tremendous interest in American artistic accomplishment, and the few Italian visiting lecturers in Italian literature, history, economy or culture in general whom it has been possible to send have not been able to foster as wide a development of Italian studies in the United States as Italy has witnessed during these ten years with respect to American studies.

To be sure, the Fulbright program has played a unique role in encouraging additional or complementary exchange opportunities. There is the Smith-Mundt Act which authorizes the Department of State to administer dollar grants for foreign citizens which can be combined with Fulbright travel grants. But the number of such grants is very limited. Also fellowships or grants-in-aid offered by American and Italian private foundations and institutions have been steadily increasing, including Italian-source scholarships for American students. Furthermore, many American professors who had been holders of grants in Italy have been instrumental in assisting Italian students or researchers to find financial support in the United States. Nevertheless, the dollar problem is still the biggest stumbling block which the administrators of the Italian program must consider in planning for the future.

All the foregoing brings us to some general conclusions on the nature of the Fulbright program as conceived by our Commission: namely that it strives to multiply, as it were, the results of each grant by coordinating it with all the other grants in a pre-established although flexible plan; by

creating the most suitable conditions for the participants' successful pursuance of their projects through adequate initial orientation, cultural and practical assistance during the period of the grant, and continued post-grant contacts; and by trying to connect related activities and to ensure the further development of projects initially favored by the grant.

Some have regarded the Fulbright program, considering its size and meaning, as the cultural counterpart of what the Marshall Plan represented on the economic plane. To some extent such a comparison is in order, but with one big difference, namely that the Fulbright program depends on the concept of reciprocity. Instead of the United States giving unilaterally to other countries, all countries contribute in equal measure to each other's advancement. The binational composition of the Fulbright Commissions is not merely a formality, but an essential tool in the formulation of mutually beneficial educational projects. The program owes its very existence to international cultural cooperation and is based on the concept that each country has something to give and something to receive. This concept has been the moving force in creating what we consider a rich heritage of important concrete achievements and of permanent and significant human experiences.

Giuseppe Villaroel

THOMAS G. BERGIN

Giuseppe Villaroel has had a long and distinguished career in Italian letters. He has written novels and short stories, he has served his term as literary critic (for *La Sera* and *Popolo d'Italia*), he has edited anthologies. But throughout his literary lifetime, which now covers a span of fifty years, he has remained faithful to the lyric muse and has to his credit some ten volumes of verse. He has not lacked recognition in his native land; his books have been published by Vallecchi and Mondadori and the major critics have found him worthy of their attention; Francesco Flora indeed wrote the introduction to *Quasi vento d'aprile*, Villaroel's most recent collection of verse and the one from which our selections are taken. He has won eight prizes, which include two Viareggio awards (1939 and 1959). Yet in spite of his record and his recognized contribution to modern Italian verse, Villaroel is not as well known abroad as he should be and is somewhat underrated even at home. The reasons for this I think are to be found in the character of his verse, which is a little off the beaten track. Villaroel has, as all poets must, suffered many influences in the course of his development; his first work had, inevitably, D'Annunzian echoes; he did not entirely escape the *crepuscolari* and of course there are memories of his greater predecessors, such as Pascoli, in his work. But one thing he has never been is obscure, indecipherable, "hermetic." He has always been intelligible; a serious handicap in a generation which is inclined to see profundity in the obscure and to consider clarity of expression a limitation. For my part I think the better of him for being comprehensible, and if I find him relatively uncomplicated I find him also perceptive and moving.

Villaroel's themes are the eternal themes of poetry: the pangs of love, the anguish of aging, the mystery of death and time, the pathos of memory. He is a very personal poet, he sees these human passions not in the void but as they affect him. He writes of his mother and his father, and his landscape, though unspecified, is always pretty clearly his Sicily. Yet his experiences, his sufferings, his self-questionings, take on a universal significance, he speaks for all men, and I believe all sensitive readers will find in his verse some recognizable echo of what their own hearts have told them. On the purely technical side, Villaroel has not been writing verse for five decades without learning the artistry of poetry; the melancholy and seductive cadence of his verse is well suited to its content; he has, better than most, learned to practice economy in expression. There remains in him to this day, I think, something of Pascoli, though without Pascoli's easy sentimentalism; he reminds me at times of certain phases of Antonio Machado although this may be pure coincidence. But such affinities are irrelevant; Villaroel has created his own manner and I believe the following selections - truly typical - will reveal an authentic and original inspiration.

Poems by Giuseppe Villaroel

Svela la notte gli astri

Svela la notte gli astri e li cancella
l'alba. Miraggio degli spazi, inganno
tra lume ed ombra, degli umani sensi.
Cosí tu vera sei, donna, e non vera
al sogno mio, quale ti finge amore,
e muti volto come il cielo, a sole
spento, che a un tratto, è un luccichío di mondi.

Distacco

Sotto l'arco stellato la tua casa
nera di sonno. Partono i carrai
tra cigolii di ruote e di lanterne.
Ti rivedrò nelle fuggenti sere
d'autunno, e le tue vesti avranno il senso
dell'aria nuova e la tua bocca odore
di miele caldo, e i seni d'oleandro.

Ah, le mie strade

Ah, le mie strade ove passai bambino!
Uguale è il cielo che svelava all'alba
gli odori dei palmizi e il primo squillo
delle chiese. Ritorna nei meriggi
il vecchio lupinaro; e nel cortile
risuona ancora la sua rauca voce.
Quante disperse rondini, la sera,
ma senza amore! Ed io, già vecchio, ascolto
le sirene che annunziano dal porto
lontane terre a chi parte, a chi resta.
Cosí tu sei partita e sei rimasta,
madre, con quel sorriso di mestizia,
in questa casa, ove la notte scende,
colma di stelle, a soffocarmi il cuore.

Translations by THOMAS G. BERGIN

Night discloses the stars

Night discloses the stars and the dawn hour
obliterates them. Mirage of space, a deceiving,
between light and shade, of our human senses.
So likewise, woman, are you true and untrue
to my dreams, as love may choose to present you,
and you change your aspect even as does the sky
at sunset, straightway becoming a spangle of worlds.

Parting

Under the arch of stars your house is lying
dark in sleep while the wagons start on their journey
with creaking wheels and lanterns swaying. Once more
I shall look upon you, come autumn's fleeting twilights.
Then from your dress will emanate a freshness
as of clean air; your mouth will smell of honey,
warm and sweet, your breasts of oleander.

Ah, my own streets

Ah, my own streets that as a child I trod!
Unchanged the sky that would unseal at dawn
the odors of the palm trees and the chiming
of the churches. At high noon returning, still
the lupin vendor makes the courtyard ring
with his familiar raucous call . . . at evening
what countless flocks of swallows in the air -
but loveless. And I, already old, give ear
to sirens from the harbor, calling out
to who must go or stay, lands far remote.
So, mother, have you gone and yet stay on
with that sweet melancholy smile of yours
in this old house wherever night comes down
loaded with stars to suffocate my heart.

Ti portasti nel sangue

Ti portasti nel sangue il tuo segreto.
Cosí il vento si porta lungo i lidi
l'odore dei giardini. Ma traluci,
oggi che piú non mi sorride amore,
col tuo volto, i tuoi sogni e le stagioni;
dolce di pianto e riso
come l'autunno alla campagna spoglia
tra i rami e il volo delle foglie morte.

Amara solitudine

Amara solitudine, la vita
trascorre inutilmente. E questa folla
mi ritrascina per le vecchie strade.
Cosí sospinge a galla il mare un naufrago.
Anche tu sei scomparso, amore. E il tempo
cancellò la tua bocca e il tuo sorriso.
Arido cuore senza pace. E pure,
se dal giardino della villa antica,
ove sostammo nelle notti estive
smemorati dai baci e dalle lacrime,
si leva il vento e porta la tua voce
tra le foglie e i ricami della luna,
il sangue mi si scioglie; e il canto fermo
dei grilli a valle e il sonno dei cipressi
oh, come tristi tornano al pensiero!
Nebbia che scende lenta alle pianure
quando arriva l'autunno e il sole è spento.

Il tuo colore

È rimasto di te solo un sospiro
nel tremore dei tigli a fil di bosco.
Il tuo sorriso è nella sera, cade
con le foglie e s'impiglia fra i roseti
dove il tempo (e il ricordo) ha il tuo colore.

You bore your secret

You bore your secret with you in your blood.
Just so the wind bears off along the shores
the scent of gardens. Yet pervasive still
your face shines on me, sweet in tears and laughter,
through dreams, through changing seasons,
as autumn through the withered countryside
is felt in boughs, in flights of dying leaves.

Bitterness of solitude

Bitterness of solitude while life
flows onward to no purpose. And this throng
drags me back into the old streets, as the sea
casts up the drowning sailor to the surface.
You too have vanished, o my love. And time
has cancelled out your mouth, your lips, your smile.
O restless, arid heart. Yet even now,
if from the garden of the ancient villa,
where we would linger in the summer nights,
by tears and kisses ravished past all thought,
a breath of wind stirs, carrying your voice,
through moon-spun tracery of bough and leaf,
my blood dissolves, and the determined song
of crickets in the valley, the sleep of cypresses
come back - oh with what sadness - to my mind.
. . . Slow descending mist that cloaks the meadows
when autumn comes and the bright sun is spent.

Color of you

Nothing is left of you now save a sighing
in the tremor of lindens edging the wood.
Your smile is in the evening and it falls
with the leaves' fall, is caught in the rose trees
where time (and memory) bears your coloring.

These poems from *Quasi vento d'aprile* (Mondadori, 1956) are here reproduced and translated by permission of the author.

Two Texts of the Neapolitan Quattrocento

GIUSEPPE VELLI

Culture and letters in Naples during the fifteenth century are now the object of abundant research. In addition to studies whose purpose is to illuminate characteristic individual figures (a recent example: Mario Santoro's *Tristano Garacciolo*), we see flourishing a more properly philological activity: the editing of texts previously poorly reproduced or not published at all. Without yielding to the temptation of making easy historical generalizations, we can say that a work of systematic and specific exploration is now taking place which cannot but result in a better comprehension not only of the great writers of that milieu (e.g. Sannazaro) but, in the long run, of the more comprehensive problem of the entire Italian culture of the 15th century.

Maria Corti in 1956 gave us an edition of the verses and letters of Pietro Jacopo De Jennaro¹, which is really worthy of notice not only for her careful historical reconstruction of the milieu and the minute and acute linguistic analysis which precede the texts, but also for the great scientific exactitude with which they are edited. One can say without hesitation that these texts - whatever their literary value may be - are definite acquisitions for literary history. De Jennaro is now almost unknown outside of a narrow circle of specialists. Nor, in his own time, did his fame progress beyond narrow regional limits; the survival in single copies of almost all his works² and the very limited references made to him by his contemporaries outside the Kingdom of Naples are significant. For example, Calmeta's omission of his name in the *Vita di Serafino Aquilano*³ prefaced to the *Collettanee* of Achillini (he mentions only Sannazaro, Cariteo, and Francesco Caracciolo as those, in the Academy of Pontano, who "nel vulgare ottenessero il princi-

pato") is instructive. And yet De Jennaro is a significant figure, not so much for the intrinsic achievements of his numerous works—modest achievements which do not in themselves justify his generous expenditure of effort in the most widely disparate kinds of writings, as for his humanistic and erudite enthusiasm (as Corti rightly affirms), and, especially in the *Canzoniere*, for his strenuous study of the vulgar texts of Tuscan tradition, which led to the achievement, we shall not say of a vital personal means of expression but of a language surpassing the regional tongue.

The, to call it that, lyrical patrimony of De Jennaro is made up partly of *barzellette* and *strambotti*, based on popular sources. These have been preserved for us, together with compositions of the same kind by other writers of the same Aragonese milieu, in a manuscript, which formerly belonged to the Count of Popoli, Giovanni Contelmo, in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris. In addition, we have a *Canzoniere* whose principal guide is Petrarch, although other material which does not deal with amorous subjects is included, and consequently other stylistic patterns have been used.

Both series of verses are, at least in part, contemporary. Their different stylistic and linguistic nature is that much more surprising. The poems of the Paris MS—although they are distinguished from those of the other poets by a lesser indulgence in dialectal modes — make a conscious attempt at imitating popular verse, while the *Canzoniere*, although it does not achieve unity of tone (it is, moreover, doubtful that the latter was sought), is obviously intended as formal art. To the diversity of aims corresponds a difference in style and even in language: on the one hand metrical forms such as *barzellette* and *strambotti* with a language based on dialect plus Latin plus Petrarch; on the other sonnets, *canzoni*, and *sestine* based on Petrarch or Dante plus Latin plus fifteenth-century Florentine.

Even within the *Canzoniere* a difference in tone and also, in part, in language (but for this cfr. Marti's observations, G.S.L.I., 1957, pp. 113-114) can be noticed, depending on the subject or the intent. This concrete mani-

festation of a literary technique which varies according to different aims is paralleled, on a theoretical level, by a return to the traditional rhetorical concept of the hierarchical plurality of styles. In regard to the vulgar tongue, this return is caused by the important problem of the imitation of a Tuscan literary tradition which was achieving dominance throughout the peninsula during the very years in which De Jennaro was writing. Rustico Perleoni⁴, who belonged to the same artistic-aristocratic circle, and who was a friend of Pietro Jacopo, divides his poems into several groups according to the "various styles" in which they are written; in the first section he places "operecte extravagante . . . sopra varii propositi proprii et de amici," of a style "basso e impolito," while in the other groups are ordered those "de piu alto stile." Vincenzo Calmeta, who wrote a few years afterwards, but not so much later as not to mirror the problems belonging to the period, is very clear on the subject. Speaking of "qual stile tra 'vulgari poeti sia da imitare," he offers, together with his judgement as to the value of the styles, some information which is very useful for the comprehension of the existing situation. Calmeta remarks that he who attempts to write in the vulgar tongue has at his disposal an entire keyboard of different techniques, ordered according to the rising values of literary dignity, from "pedestri stili" (*stanze*, *barzellette*, *frottole* with musical accompaniment) through the "arguziette" of a Cariteo or a Serafino up to Petrarch "tanto aperto e giocondo quanto si convenga" and Dante who is "il supremo culme della volgar poesia." Calmeta insists particularly on Dante and Petrarch⁵: "in questi due la somma perfezione consiste. Chi vuole adunque in sonetti e canzoni fare profitto, dal Petrarca non s'alieni: chi in stil grandiloquo, Dante li sia guida e lanterna." This chapter, written after 1500, certainly mirrors a period of subtler literary reflection. It, however, sufficiently illuminates what the diffuse sensibility of writers in the immediately preceding decades must have been; this is demonstrated in the Neapolitan territory by De Jennaro himself.

Corti has fine pages on the composite nature of De

Jennaro's technique and on his Petrarchism.⁶ Going back to a distinction (which originated with E. Bigi) between pure Petrarchism, which takes Petrarch as an absolute model of psychology and style (such as can be seen, for example, in Giusto de' Conti), and a more open Petrarchism, which accepts stimuli from other writers and also from other subjects, Corti makes very useful and, in the writer's opinion, valid observations on this latter type of Petrarchism, which is, moreover, that of De Jennaro. Thus the combination of Petrarchistic motifs and frameworks with classical or even popular references, towards which De Jennaro leans, is certainly not an unconscious phenomenon; the result of such mingling is almost always disastrous, and its hybrid nature immediately strikes the eye. But this effect is due to the exiguity of his poetic gifts and does not affect the value of the conscious literary effort made by De Jennaro to try different themes and to follow different models. Some mention of Dante, whom De Jennaro already imitates in the *Canzoniere* more often than Corti appears to believe,⁷ seems appropriate here. This imitation risks to pass unobserved because the Dantesque elements are often superimposed on a framework or context derived from Petrarch. And yet it cannot be affirmed that De Jennaro was deaf to the "stile grandiloquo" of Dante. Indeed these borrowings almost always have the effect of giving an aulic stamp to the poems,⁸ now by means of erudite allusions,⁹ now through the use of unmistakable similes¹⁰ or an artificial play of assonance.¹¹ An interesting case of various coexistent borrowings is offered by Sonnet XLV. Here within a Petrarchistic frame (revealed by a direct quotation¹²) we find a movement towards Dante, evidently chosen because of his greater affectation of expression: an affectation which De Jennaro further emphasized by using a periphrasis to indicate Demophoon.¹³

However, De Jennaro's "Dantism" is not, so to say, pure, exclusive, clearly defined in a conception of lofty eloquence, as was heretofore indicated; it is, in sum, only one of the ingredients of his style. In the end, De Jennaro shows himself unable to keep different stylistic spheres

distinct and to follow their peculiar physiognomy. This can be demonstrated in a significant manner. The writer does not think it has been noticed that Sonnet XXIX has as its immediate source *Inferno* XXVI, 25 ff. But here we witness a complete inversion of the procedure indicated above: Dante is degraded to mere "matter" — to a point of departure from which De Jennaro proceeds on a different level, with complete indifference to the original context. Thus in Sonnet XXIII — on which Corti pauses in order to denounce the coolness of construction — the images and verbal echoes (and downright combinations of rhymes: for verses 5-8 see the *canzone*: *Donna pietosa e di novella etate*, vv. 71, 74, 76, 83.) borrowed from the *Rime* and from the *Vita Nuova* are engulfed among details from a different tradition. This sonnet really can be seen as symbolic of De Jennaro's technique of composition.

Texts like those of De Jennaro, which have a rather slight poetic value, can appear significant if placed in the historical-cultural milieu which spawned them; this, Corti did not forget: hence the importance of her research.

The writer would like to append here two additional notes which are directly concerned with the ties and friendships of De Jennaro (important elements in an era and milieu particularly sensitive to intellectual conversation and correspondence). The writer will deal with these two details more extensively elsewhere. Sonnet XVI is addressed to a friend to comfort him in the occasion of the death of his beloved, Carina. The name of this friend has remained unknown to Maria Corti. However, the National Library of Vienna owns a 15th Century MS¹⁴ on vellum which contains: Johannes Loisius, *El libro chiamato naufragio in laude de la celesta dea Carina*, preceded by a dedicatory epistle to the Baron of Muro. Following a collection of sonnets (ff. 89-94) with the rubric: "El signor baron de Muro. Sonecti mandati da gli amici ad l'autore facti in laude de la soa donna confortandolo," the MS closes with a sonnet by a certain "Thomas Gramaticus" preceded by the rubric: "Ad venerabilem patrem fratrem Johannem Loisium coppularium huius operis autorem ob eius naufragii evasionem." The

name of the Baron of Muro¹⁵ is already a helpful element for the definite location of the MS in the Neopolitan-Aragonese milieu. If we reflect on the identity between the name of the lady celebrated by Johannes Loisius, and the name of the beloved of De Jennaro's friend, and if we consider that this same "Thomas Gramaticus" who is shown to be on good terms with Johannes Loisius, appears to be the author of an epistle and of a sonnet in praise of De Jennaro at the end of "Sei etate della vita humana,"¹⁶ we will have no difficulty in admitting that Johannes Loisius is the poet friend to whom De Jennaro addresses Sonnet XVI.

Sonnet CIII has a rubric:: "Al mag.co messer Jacobo Tolomeo, avendo lette certe rime per lui fatte." For Corti, (p. 162) the latter is a "personaggio non identificabile." Instead he happens to be the Sienese Jacopo de' Tolomei, prefect of Castel S. Angelo under Pio II,¹⁷ then jailed under Paul II for cruelty and poor administration. Gaspare da Verona and Michele Canensi both speak of him.¹⁸ In jail he composed those verses to which De Jennaro refers, which are still extant.¹⁹ Platina, jailed for the "congiura" of the members of Pomponio's Academy against Paolo II, addresses an epistle to him.²⁰ Still a prisoner in 1470,²¹ he was freed immediately after the death of Paolo II. The safe-conduct quoted below²² offers us a terminus post for the composition of De Jennaro's sonnet. Herein is clarified the event referred to in such strong language: "Ma poi, pensando che l'offesa fronte/ vedde la morte vile, impia e repente/ dell'offensore,²³ mitico al presente/ con toa vendetta le mei acerbe ponte."

Juniano Maio's "De Maiestate," edited by Franco Gaeta, also in 1956,²⁴ presents us with a noteworthy experiment in learned Neapolitan prose which is not part of any definite tradition. In fifteenth-century regional milieu fluidity is even greater in the field of prose than in that of poetry; among other reasons, because of the wider practical implications which distinguish prose. In Naples, it is true, a model was soon adopted, even in this field. Boccaccio's name is often invoked by the prose writers of the time. However, due to the typical tendency towards exaggeration of those

who have no native tradition of recognized authority on which to rest, and who feel the need to struggle against dialectal temptations, he is the more imitated the more he deviates from the common expression, the more his writing is affected, "limato"²⁵ (polished), baroque. It is enough to re-read the exordia of many of the *Novelle* of Masuccio, in spite of the fact that he is guided by very strong narrative interests, to realize *which* Boccaccio is being alluded to in such an obvious manner. Hence the great interest in Naples in the prose works preceding the *Decameron*. An entire literary genre, that of amorous epistles in prose, strongly flourishing at the Aragonese court,²⁶ is extensively nourished by that source (even though, at times, one can perceive traces of the Ovidian tradition to which Boccaccio himself was so sensitive). Maio, however, does not take part in this extreme Boccaccesque trend. On the other hand, he is far from the purely dialectal prose of a Loise de Rosa or from that, more open to popular influence, of Francesco del Tuppo. His experiment really deserves attention.

Juniano Maio, grammarian, rhetorician, tutor of princes of the Aragonese house, teacher of Sannazaro, enjoyed a considerable fame²⁷ in his own period. His best-known work is the dictionary: "De Priscorum proprietate verborum," which was reprinted several times at the end of the fifteenth century in Naples and other cities. He also edited the classics: the letters of Pliny; orations chosen from Cicero; and, as has not been pointed out up to now, an anthology of Cicero's epistles.²⁸

His treatise in the vulgar tongue "De Maiestate" (1492) is certainly of courtly inspiration. The feeling that pervades it is identical with that which moved Aurelio Brandolini to translate and dedicate to the same Ferdinand I, the panegyric of Pliny to Trajan.²⁹ In addition Maio, a Neapolitan and probably a nobleman, felt sincere admiration and gratitude for a monarch who victoriously resisted terrible blows from enemies at home and abroad, consolidated his power, and gave Naples and the kingdom a period of peace and prosperity. Gaeta has justly identified this as a source of Maio's idealization of the figure of Ferdi-

nand of Aragon; while at the same time, unlike Lojacomò, he recognizes the limited political value, on the plane of ideas, of the entire treatise.³⁰ "De Maiestate" is not nourished by a line of thought which develops dynamically, through confutations and demonstrations; it has its origin in a state of mind which is static in itself and not at all receptive to negative elements or shades. Hence the exclamatory aspect of Maio's prose, the lack of structural foundations, and the absence of any development of thought. Hence also the all-accepting attitude he takes toward his sources, which are not selected and used according to a criterion of efficient function, but more often, one could almost say, passively endured.³¹ The result is that they dominate the next, and thus fatally obliterate an already weak ideological structure.

A great faith in the words of the ancients, transferred to the vulgar tongue with the enthusiasm of one who feels their fascination and wishes to become their interpreter by participating in a noble contest of style is accompanied by a feeling, which, in its most direct formulations, reveals a clear Neapolitan stamp. (cfr. for the tone and the matter dealt with, "l'esempio" in Chap. XVII "De la pietà de li ri.") It is absolutely necessary to keep in mind the texts translated or, more often, paraphrased by Maio, not only for the comprehension of his phraseology, but also for an exact evaluation of his style. Gaeta³² has identified most of these texts by using the marginal indications of the Parisian MS on which he based his edition (Ital. 1711), but he has not utilized them to the necessary extent. And this is not the least of the defects of the text presented by him.³³ The writer limits himself here to the indication of a few places not at all or only passingly touched upon by others, in which hasty readings or erroneous interpretations of the text might have been avoided by a careful study of the source:

(P. 126, l. 13 ff.) "Come anco dice Tullio in multi lochi, e spezialmente ne lo libro *De amicitia*, chi la virtù ama se medesimo cognosce et intende quanto da per sè è amabile senza speranza de estrinseco bene." Gentile has already noticed that Gaeta changed the *che* (l. 16) of the MS

to *chi*. But he does not proceed further to note that the meaning of the passage is completely falsified. Keeping in mind that here *medesmo* is an invariable form referred to "virtù,"³⁴ the passage in question ought to read as follows: "Come anco dice Tullio in multi lochi, e spezialmente ne lo libro *De amicitia* che la virtù ama se medesmo, cognosce et intende quanto da per sè è amabile senza speranza de estrinseco bene." A simple comparison with the original Ciceronian text is sufficient to straighten things out: "Omnino est amans sui virtus; optume enim se ipsa novit, quamque amabilis sit, intellegit" (*De amicitia*, XXVI, 98).

(P. 179, ll. 8 ff.) "... nè devemo essere tanto studiosi a contrafare la natura de altro che de la propria, nè debiamo discordare imperò che sforzare la natura più che naturale instinto non permette ne fa diventare (cod.: diventare) de mala grazia, inetti, contrafatti et odiosi." Here, too, the Ciceronian source helps to avoid a distortion of meaning which results from Gaeta's interpretation: "quam conservare non possis, si, aliorum naturam imitans, omittas tuam." The passage should then be interpreted: "... tanto studiosi ... che de la propria ne dobbiamo discordare." The *ne* of the MS is not to be taken as a negative conjunction but as a pronominal particle (=ci). For another serious case of confusion on the part of Gaeta, see Gentile, *rev. cit.*, p. 153.

(P. 181-182) "e questo perchè ne lo nostro core de carne sole essere una certa cosa de nostra fiacca molle, effeminata, senza vigore e senza forze ... " Gaeta, in the glossary, interprets *fiacca* as a substantive, *debolezza*. But is there any basis for this interpretation? Mauro *rev. cit.* thought that *natura* should be interposed after *effeminata*. Cicero, who is here translated (Gaeta did not identify the passage), says: (*Tusc.* II, XXI) "Est in animis omnium fere natura molle quiddam, demissum, humile, enervatum quodammodo et languidum." The conjecture *natura* is thus validated; the word, however, should be inserted after *nostra*.

(P. 234) The integration is useless, provided that we read Aristotle carefully (*Eth.*, IV, 3, 20.). This passage moreover has already been paraphrased by Maio himself, chap. VII, p. 84 (it is however true that here Gaeta's text

is marred by a considerable lacuna; see Gentile, p. 169).

(Pp. 239-240) The integration is useless. The occurrence of *per tanto*, alone, in the principal clause following a subordinate concessive one, is usual in Maio. The paraphrased passage is here from Cicero, *De Fin.* V, XXIV, 69 (not identified by Gaeta): "Non perfecti autem homines, et *tamen* ingeniis excellentibus praediti, excitantur saepe gloria: quae habet formam honestatis et similitudinem." Cfr. "abenchè . . . pertanto," p. 229, ll. 5-6; "ancora che . . . per tanto," p. 92, ll. 17 f.; "per ben che . . . per tanto," p. 28, ll. 19 f. (Cic. "quamquam . . . tamen"); p. 136, ll. 19-20 "ancora che . . . per tanto" (Cic. "quamquam . . . tamen") etc.

Consultation of the source also helps to avoid errors in punctuation. For example: p. 107, l. 5, "la quale, benigna e grata assai, piú rende che quel che recepe.." The comma should be placed after *grata*: cfr. Cic. "qui *multo plus* efferunt quam acceperunt."

Given the static nature of this prose, which moves on by juxtapositions, the punctuation problem is a difficult one. Here are only some of the cases in which the writer disagrees with Gaeta.

P. 41, l. 2: "tu respondesti: 'Sì benignamente volesse Iddio etc.'" *Sì benignamente* should be connected to the preceding: "tu respondesti sì benignamente . . ." cfr. what follows: "O parola benigna e clemente . . ."

P. 41. l. 18: "voce de umanità, esempio": we would eliminate the comma.

P. 79, ll. 16 ff.: "si natura non usa sue naturale forze di costumi, omne simulata fizione si scopre." But here it is a question of the opposition of "natura" and "costumi", ll. as on. p. 239, ll.5-6; the comma should be placed just before "di costumi."

P. 118, ll. 21 ff. We would remove the comma between "fronte" and "mostrare" and place it after "aperto," so as not to destroy the parallelism of expression: "in bocca et in fronte mostrare amore a chi sinceramente ama, così scoperto suo odio portare . . ."

There is, in Maio, an evident search for style: it is

more important to take notice of the intensity of effort than of the result itself. De Jennaro had before him a tradition of vulgar Tuscan poetry, which he tried progressively to approach (even making choices within the tradition itself, although in a confused and, in the end, an unfortunate manner); but Maio looks to the classics both as a stimulus for and as a test of his abilities.

There is on the one hand Maio's lack (as has been mentioned) of a determining speculative interest and, on the other, a state of fluidity in the prose of the milieu in which he writes. Therefore he is completely unrestricted and relatively free from limitations as to the stylistic modes he can employ. However, he does not exercise this freedom of choice in ample and valid experiments. From the very first pages of his treatise, a sustained tone, an effect pointedly and monotonously sought after, strike the reader in an unfavorable manner. Note the opposition between knowledge and experience which is polarized in insistent antithetical parallelisms (pp. 1-2: which is also a rhetorically adorned *topos*); the *gradatio* of p. 4: "intra li quali io minimo vedendola (Ferdinand's Majesty) con altezza la contemplo, e contemplandola, con maraviglia la concepò, e conceputa . . . con diletto la godo . . ."; the quotation from Dante immediately following: "E de tanto alto penetrare tu sì' lo mio auttore, lo mio duce e maistro", which is inserted naturally in a prose which is emphatic and not bound by a rigid syntactical structure. The entire medieval tradition of rhetoric lies behind such a proceeding. But it is also surprising to note the youthful spirit with which Maio copies directly the ornamentation of his classical models, the apprentice-like patience with which he practices the stylistic turns of Latin art prose, certainly in their most obvious form.

Chap. XVII can be taken as a proof of how much Maio has drawn from his assiduous apprenticeship in the texts he translates or paraphrases. The very structure of this chapter (the *esempio* here is amplified in an unusual manner - it is the enthusiastic acknowledgement of Ferdinand's concrete justice which is expressed here - with detriment

to the abstract definition of that virtue) and the particularly eloquent beginning ("Questa è la via che a la eternità ne aduce" (Gaeta: "a la eternitate aduce") "per questo sintiere si va al celeste domo . . ." Cfr. in a not very dissimilar context, in a sonnet of Sannazaro, LXXI, vv. 12-13: "Quest'è il cammin ch'al ciel di salto in salto/ conduce al fin con palma e con vittoria") show it to be exceptionally important to Maio. Here, at the very beginning, are a *gradatio* and a *traductio* (p. 201). On p. 204 a *commutatio*, which Maio finds in Cicero (*De Leg.* III, 1) is readily utilized. To give further examples is pointless: one by one almost all the *exornationes* are made use of in an ascending development, up to the *nominatio* (p. 211, end), with little sense of discretion. It is, however, interesting to observe such an experiment with the vulgar tongue by a man certainly nourished by ample culture, and, what is more, full of humanistic enthusiasm; that enthusiasm which he was to display also in teaching, and which, in addition to his writings, was to gain for him the recognition of Neapolitan friends and of De Jennaro himself:

Junian vide che tua patria volse
perpetua far con soa tersa doctrina
in cui le muse et lor fonte s'accolse.

NOTES

1. Pietro Jacopo De Jennaro, *Rime e Lettere*, ed. by Maria Corti, Bologna, Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1956.
2. A *strambotto* which is certainly De Jennaro's and which escaped Corti's attention occurs in Cod. Vat. Lat. 5170, c. 37 b: Pe. Ia, Neapolitan., "Ricipe bianco marmo e ben lo pista" (cfr. the index of the MS published by M. Menghini, *Rass. Bibl. d. Lett. Ital.*, III, 1895, p. 25, n. CXCIX).
3. The *Vita* has now been reprinted by Cecil Grayson in Vincenzo Calmeta, *Prose e lettere edite e inedite*, Bologna, 1959. In that passage of Calmeta which refers to the Academy of Pontano (p. 24), Grayson reproduces the *Collettanee* text "Attilio Musefilo." The correction, *Altilio, Musefilo*, goes back to Tafuri (cfr. G.S.L.I. XI, p. 220).
4. Quoted by Corti, ed. cit., p. LI.

5. Op. cit., p. 24.
6. The writer plans to return again elsewhere to the topic of Petrarchism in Naples.
7. See M. Marti, G.S.L.I., CXXXIV (1957), p. 111.
8. See for example the imitation of a precious astronomic exordium of Dante's, De Jennaro, LVIII, 1-2: "Già si vedea ormai d'Aurora il fronte/coronato di gemme in ogni parte..." Cfr. Purg. IX, espec. v.4 "di gemme la sua fronte era lucente." In both cases an atmosphere of allegoric dream is introduced.
9. De Jennaro, XV, vv.1 ff.: "Vago ucellin, che giorno e notte all'ombra/forsi a memoria del tuo antico pianto . . ." Cfr. Purg. IX, 13 ff.: "Nell'ora che comincia i tristi lai/la rondinella presso alla mattina,/forse a memoria de' suo' primi guai . . ." This insertion occurs after a declaredly Petrarchan beginning; moreover, De Jennaro does not follow Dante's version of the myth.
10. De Jennaro, XX, vv. 19 f. "Io stava come l'uom che teme al passo,/mirando fisso al sommo dal gran monte . . ." cfr. Inf. XIII, 45: " . . . e stetti come l'uom che teme." Cfr. also De Jennaro CXVII, 27-29, Inf. II, 38 and Purg., V, 16-17.
11. De Jennaro CXVI, vv. 3 ff. "Madre del summo padre, anzilla e sposa/ . . . /non far al priego mio, te priego, nego": cfr. Inf. XXVI, 65 ff. " . . . maestro, assai ten priego/ e ripriego, che il priego vaglia mille,/ che non mi facci dell'attender niego." Following Dante's model which rhymes *ten priego* with *niego*, is not De Jennaro's *nego*, rhyming with *devoto priego*, to be changed in *niego*?
12. De Jennaro, sonnet cit., vv. 3 f. "Perchè la greca Elena in poca cura/ Paris per tante ville seguir volse?" Cfr. Petrarch, *Triumphus Cupidinis* I, v. 129, "ch'Amor e lui seguì per tante ville": this detail is attributed by De Jennaro to Elena, while in Petrarch it concerns Medea.
13. De Jennaro, sonnet cit., vv. 5-6 "Perchè la Rodopeia seco accolse/ collui ch'al ritornar non si assicura?" Cfr. Par. IX, 100-101: "nè quella Rodopea che delusa/ fu da Demofoonte . . ." For Corti (index of names, pp. 206-207) the *Rodopeia* is Philomela. But the context which the writer clarified above leaves no doubt that she is instead Phyllis, the abandoned beloved of illustrious literary tradition: cfr. Ovid, *Her.* II.
14. According to H. J. Hermann, *Die Handschriften und Inkunabeln der italienischen Renaissance in der Nationalbibliothek in Wien*, 4. Unteritalien, Leipzig 1933, p. 19.

15. In some MSS he is Francesco Galeota's correspondent. Percopo identifies him with Mazzeo Ferrillo, castellan of the Castle of Capri and councilor of Ferdinand I. (Cfr. *Arch. stor. per le prov. napol.*, XVIII, pp. 806-812.)
16. Cfr. R. Renier, *G.S.L.I.*, VIII, p. 249.
17. A letter of Aeneas Sylvius from Vienna is addressed to him under the date of Oct. 2, 1451: cfr. Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, ed. by Fr. I. Antrobus, vol. II, 141, n. 2.
18. G. Zippel, ed. *RR. II. SS. tom. III*, pt. XVI, p. 26, p. 103.
19. British Museum, Add. MS. 19908. This MS was known to Pastor.
20. Cfr. V. Zabughin, *Giulio Pomponio Leto*, Roma, 1909, I, pp. 139 ff.
21. Zippel, *ibid.*, p. 219.
22. Zippel, *ibid.*, p. 103; Safeconduct dated Jan. 10, 1472, "dil. filio Iacobo de Ptholomeis . . . ut ad almam Urbem ceterasque nostras et Ro. Ecclesie civitates et terras accedere in eis que tute, libere et impune versari valeat."
23. Pope Paul died of a stroke: Pastor, *op. cit.*, p. 190. Note the significant proximity in the MS of the quoted sonnet to the one, pregnant with personal passion: "A chi ogie suge el sangue umano, Antonello de Petruciiis." Some of that passion seems to be shared by the sonnet addressed to Jacobo Tolomeo.
24. Juniano Maio, *De Maiestate*, ed. F. Gaeta, Bologna, Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1956.
25. Cfr. letter of P.J. De Jennaro to the Count of Popoli, ed. cit., p. 37; he thought to discover in a letter of the Count "el limato dire del fiorentin Voccaccio."
26. The writer is thinking particularly of the epistles of Ceccarella Minutolo, in an MS of the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris and in another MS, which is perhaps still in the Capialbi Library of Vibo Valentia. Croce spoke of Minutolo, publishing some abstracts from the Paris MS (*Aneddoti di varia letteratura*, I, Napoli, 1942, pp. 54-63). Croce, loc. cit., p. 59-60 reads: "mio iuvenile stato fo, in lo quale, prococata da man de dio Cupiddo, ad isso in parte estendendo citra la quarta linea . . ." But cod. cit., f. 11a, has: "mio iuvenile stato fo in lo quale provocata da mandiode Cupiddo ad isso in parte essendendo . . ." The writer would consider *mandiode* a dialectal voice for *manigoldo* (executioner); other documented variations: *manegoto* (Maio, Scoppa); *manivolto* (Scoppa); *manioto -te*

(cfr. *Una cronaca napoletana figurata del quattrocento*, ed. by R. Filangieri from MS 801 of the Pierpont Morgan Library, Naples, 1956, pp. 68, 72, 73). For the image, cfr. Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, XXIII, 121 : "il manigoldo Amor." Croce, *ibid.*: "Adunca, caro Theophilo, tue vane imprese non te iovaranno mai; intende ad una come se apertene via, et de mei cose non tentare, che porgi l'occhi alle tenebrose luce et pusse (*sic*) tua rete influitante, et numerose volte, dove mai spere de tuoi affecti desiderata preda. Vale." Cod. cit. f.lla: ". . . intende ad tua como se apertene via et de mei cose non tentare che porge l'occhi alle tenebrose luce et pune tua rete in fluitante et nemorosa valle dove mai spere de tuoi affecti desiderata preda. Vale."

27. The information on his life given by Gaeta (which is, moreover, that gathered by Percopo) should be supplemented by the additions of Fava-Bresciano, *La stampa a Napoli nel XV secolo*, Lipsia, 1911-12, vol. I, pp. 148 ff.
28. GW, VI, 594, n. 6864. The only known copy, incomplete, is at the Cambridge University Library. In opposition to GW, Accurti, *Annotationes ad opus cui titulus "Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke," voll. I-VI*, 1936, p. 113, doubts that the edition is Roman. In the epistle that precedes it, Maio confirms his admiration for Cicero in almost the same words used in the preface to *Orationes Selectae*, Naples, 1480.
29. In "proemio . . . fatto nelle traduzione del panegirico di Plinio al serenissimo Re don Ferrando d'Aragona" he says (cod. Ital. 616, Bibl. Natl. of Paris, f. 1 a): "Molte son le cose che danno a dimostrare l'animo d'uno ottimo e probatissimo servidore, gloriosissimo Re, ma di tutte la principale e potissima è l'amore, attento che l'altre tutte sono all'obediencia e commandamento dil principe sottoposte e possonsi o violentemente comandare o contra la volontà e disposizione sua fare: l'amore solo nè è a ccomandamento alcuno subietto nè può per violenza o forza alcuna essere contra la volontà sua constretto . . ." Among the other "frutti" which this love "genera nell'animo del servidore" there is "una perpetua cogitazione e continuo stimulo dil suo signore, per modo che di e notte di lui parla, di lui pensa, lui ha negli occhi, lui ha nel core, da llui cominciano, in lui finiscono tutti non solo li ragionamenti ma ancora li atti e pensieri suoi."
30. For this last point Gaeta was preceded by T. Persico (cfr. *Diomede Carafa*, 1899, p. 178, and *Gli scrittori politici napoletani dal '400 al '700*, Napoli, 1912, pp. 69-75). In his study Persico kept in mind the copy of G. V. Meola, now at the Bibl. Natl. of Naples (MS XIII. B. 37). On this copy,

see A. Miola, *Il Propugnatore*, N. S., I, pt. II, pp. 141-147.

31. Or even sought for their particular expressive appeal: cfr. *Rass. della lett. ital.*, 1957, p. 293 (Ponte). An extensive discussion of Maio's predilection for and imitation of the "conceits" and rhetoric of his sources would carry one too far afield.
32. P. 31, *ed. cit.*, there is a passage not identified by Gaeta: it is *De Const. Sap.* XIX, 3. On the margin, located next to the passage, the MS has *Dicto de Seneca nel libro contra le iniurie*. The passage not identified by Gaeta on p. 171 is Cicero, *Pro Cael.* III, 8. On p. 27, 11. 8ff. Gaeta, as Maio indicates (is the error his or the scribe's?), gives as the source *De Off.* I, 66-92. But the passage here referred to is *De Fin.* II, 14, 46; Maio: "Questa magnanimitate ave in sè certa cosa ampla e magnifica più tosto atta a signorigiare (cod. signorigiare) et ad altrui comandare che ad altrui commandamenti obedire. La quale tutte le cose aspere non solamente le tene legiere ad comportarele, ma eziandio le cose prospere bascie e dapoco ad estimarele; et ave un'altra cosa in sè eccelsa, non timendo cosa nulla altro che vergogna nè mai voltare le spalle ad omo inimico, ante sempre essere libero et invito." Cicero: "Eadem ratio habet in se quiddam amplum atque magnificum, ad impetrandum magis, quam ad parendum accomodatum; omnia humana non tolerabilia solum sed etiam levia ducens: altum quiddam et excelsum, nihil timens, nemini cedens, semper invictum."
33. For these defects see Maria Corti's review, *Archivio Glottologico Italiano*, XLII, 1957, 1, pp. 72-79, and especially the severe and documented review of Salvatore Gentile, *Filologia Romanza*, V, 1958, pp. 143-209. Alfredo Mauro also discusses some textual problems in *Giornale italiano di filologia*, X, 1957, pp. 165-169.
34. Gentile (*rev. cit.*, pp. 149-151) speaks of the invariability of *medesmo*. To the examples gathered from Neapolitan 15th Century texts, the writer would add one of Giovanni Antonio de Petrucciis: "Ad Francesco Scala como non è cosa che iuve che quella medesmo non possa nocere." (ed. Perito, p. 285); and one of King Ferdinand: "et abenche siamo certi non essere bisogno raccomandavelo essendo certi vui lo amati, per satisfare a nui medesmo ve pregamo . . ." (letter to Pietro di Cosimo, in De Marinis, *La biblioteca napoletana dei re d'Aragona*, vol. I, p. 40). In the example of Loise de Rosa quoted by Gentile there is an oversight "pla codelitate" for "per la codelitate" (the MS has the customary sign of abbreviation).

Trends

LITERARY PERIODICALS

The ordinary reader in Italy finds little difficulty in keeping abreast of current literary production. For though the complaint that no one reads and no one buys books is chronic, an amazing amount of attention is paid to literature. Daily newspapers and the widely-read illustrated weeklies review books and comment on the more striking literary events. Bibliographical and trade journals, such as *Libri e riviste d'Italia*, issued monthly by the Council of Ministers, or Vallecchi's *Le carte parlanti*, provide specialized information. The well-established *Fiera letteraria* and *L'Italia che scrive* offer a solid, middle-of-the-road kind of critical evaluation.

And periodically there appear any number of literary magazines, lasting for a season or longer, that answer some need, fill some gap uncovered by their editors. It is in them that new movements are christened, new problems formulated, new writers introduced to the public. They, more than any other kind of publication, reveal the state of literature at a given moment, give expression to the dissatisfactions and uncertainties of writers and critics, and present their hopes and suggestions for the future. No one interested in the mechanisms that guide literary movements in Italy can afford to pass them by.

One such magazine has just taken its place beside the many that have come and gone since the war. It bears the sprightly-sounding name of *Il Menabò*, a word which like its English equivalent, "dummy," belongs to the jargon of publishing and underlines the functional ideals of the editors, Elio Vittorini and Italo Calvino.

Il Menabò, too, offers a "new" program and an original technique for implementing it. It shares the basic ob-

jective of almost all literary magazines: To present not only current creative writing but also a critical interpretation that attempts to place this writing within a framework. In *Il Menabò* the interpretation — that is, the editorial comment — may be full or incidental; it may be indirectly expounded in the sections devoted to reviews and criticism; or it may be only implied by what is chosen for publication. Usually critical comment is subordinated directly to the selections. In the first issue (Torino, Einaudi, 1959), for instance, an excellent war novel by a new writer, Giuliano Palladino's *Pace a El Alamein*, was accompanied by an essay on war literature from Stendhal and Tolstoy to the present, while a second selection, Lucio Mastronardi's *Il calzolaio di Vigevano*, was followed by an examination of the infiltration of dialects into the Italian literary language. Two recurrent themes of the modern Italian novel were thus highlighted, in an effort to turn Italian literature away from the stagnation which, according to Vittorini, is its present state.

Il Menabò's is but one solution to the problem of combining presentation and interpretation coherently and significantly. Last year, for example, the staff of the Milanese periodical *Il Verri* sponsored a number of discussion sessions which were open to the public. At these meetings the communication between writer and reader was even more direct, and the didactic function of the contemporary magazine became even more apparent.

It may be claimed that theorizing about literature from a doctrinal point of view is unimportant, and that only the intrinsic quality of the work of art counts; however, this is not the general feeling in Italy today. The struggle between art and ideology is as alive, if not as violent, as ever. The excitement felt by the intellectuals who worked underground at the height of Fascism, and then continued the fight in the open during the Resistance and the first post-war years, may be colored by disillusion and bitterness, but it is not completely dead. Nor is the worship of form and expression, of the esoteric and the metaphysical, which characterized "Hermeticism." The weight of this immediate dual past is borne with impatience, but it apparently cannot be shaken

off. In Italy with its deeply ingrained concept of historical continuity, whatever position is taken is inevitably seen as related to the past. The writer cannot help but ask himself to what particular tradition of writing he belongs. He cannot help but see his work as part of a continuum which is not merely autobiographical.

Significant in this respect is a series of articles that have been appearing in *Officina* since 1955. This magazine, whose name calls to mind the bustling atmosphere of factory workshops, is published in Bologna under the direction of Francesco Leonetti, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Roberto Roversi. The very first number (May 1955) opened with an essay by Pasolini on Pascoli. In it Pasolini analyzed some of Pascoli's typical procedures, such as the introduction of the spoken language — both colloquial and vernacular — into poetry, the search for impressionistic details, the analogic technique, all of which left their mark on later poets. And he summarized Pascoli's contribution to modern Italian poetry in a statement of uncommon psychological insight: "There coexist in Pascoli, in apparent contradiction, an obsession which tends to keep him ever pathologically identical with himself, and an experimentalism, which almost as if to balance that psychological disability, tends to vary and renew him incessantly."

Pasolini's article appeared under the heading: "La nostra storia," which must, of course, be translated not as "Our Story" but as "Our History." The history referred to is the history of a group of writers known as Neo-experimentalists, whose work Pasolini illustrated in a later issue of *Officina* by presenting a brief anthology of their writings. But Pasolini's concern to find a father for the movement to which he belongs is not merely academic. It is born of a deep anxiety, of the fear he had expressed in the concluding lines of his long poem, "Le ceneri di Gramsci" ("Gramsci's Ashes"), when after an impassioned evocation of life-in-the-raw as lived in the proletarian suburbs of Rome, he asks: "But I, with the self-awareness/ Of one who can live only in history,/ Could I ever again act in pure passion,/ If I knew that our history is dead?" In subse-

quent numbers of *Officina* others took up the study of "La nostra storia." Leopardi, Manzoni, Serra, "decadentism," the "Scapigliatura," and the "Crepuscolari" were in turn the subjects of critical analysis. This series in *Officina* is essentially a rewriting of the history of modern Italian literature from the point of view of Neo-experimentalism.

Articles such as those by Pasolini and his colleagues, whatever their immediate purpose, are part of a continual revision of literary history. The only surprising thing about them, perhaps, is that they are found in a "little magazine," traditionally the forum for "militant" criticism. For the suggestions for research they incidentally contain are not fundamentally different from those of properly scholarly works. The four volumes on Italian literature published in the series *Orientamenti culturali* (Milano, Marzorati, 1956), although the work of specialists, reflect a point of view very similar to that just described. These critics, too, though equipped with full bibliographical apparatus, focus on that part of the Italian past which is still alive today. The gap between academic and "militant" criticism, a gap that had been quite pronounced from the time of the founding of the first literary magazines in Italy after 1870, now seems to have definitely closed.

Further evidence is provided by another recent magazine, *Il Verri*, whose founder and director, Luciano Anceschi, is Professor of Esthetics at the University of Bologna. Anceschi is the author of *Autonomia ed eteronomia dell'arte*, a study of what he singles out as the two basic attitudes towards art; art for art's sake, and moralistic or social art. The work appeared first in 1936, the same year as Walter Binni's *Poetica del decadentismo italiano*. Anceschi was later to take pains to clarify his theoretical position and to show how it differed from Binni's. He pointed out that whereas Binni's views stemmed from Croce's school of idealistic philosophy, he himself had been a student of Banfi, whose orientation was existential. Consequently, Anceschi looks not for abstract ideas of art, but for the concrete illustration of what art is at a given moment and in a given form. He agrees with the distinction made by Serra between the

two typical tendencies in criticism represented by Carducci and Croce: Carducci is "the professional critic," Croce "the philosopher critic." This distinction is important primarily because it helps to define the position of *Il Verri*, midway between art and philosophy. Their different theoretical positions do not, however, invalidate the fact that *Autonomia ed eteronomia* and *La poetica del decadentismo* together are a veritable milestone in Italian intellectual history. In 1936, in the face of full-fledged and triumphant cultural nationalism, they dared to insist upon the interdependence of cultural movements, between country and country, and between epoch and epoch.

Il Verri continues this point of view. Its horizon is wide, geographically as well as historically. Part of the editorial statement in the first number (Autumn 1956) reads: "It is becoming increasingly clear that *avantgardism* no longer attempts to be a grand rebellion. More discreetly, it enters the scene fully aware that it is easy to find continuity behind any rebellion, that, indeed, continuity is at work within the act of rebellion itself. This discreetness does not exclude violence. But it underlines — and this is important — the closeness of the relationship between *past* and *present* poets. All poetry is contemporaneous and all national poetic cultures are of necessity complementary." In choosing to remember Pietro Verri, founder of the combative eighteenth century *Il Caffè*, in the title of his magazine, Anceschi places himself in the Milanese tradition of cultural enlightenment. As Verri before him, so Anceschi hopes to create "a microcosm which will prefigure Europe."

What may be called the European theme has been recurring with insistence in Italian magazine and essay writing since the war. It counteracts the accusation of provincialism, often levelled at Italian intellectuals and generally readily accepted by them. When *Botteghe Oscure* started publication in the Spring of 1948, one of its main objectives was to make foreign literature accessible to wide stratas of the reading public. "The windows of the ark open out upon a world ravaged by the flood," was its motto. In its early numbers *Botteghe Oscure* accompanied its foreign selections by ex-

cellent translations into Italian. It has also published the work of many of Italy's best younger writers, among them Soldati, Pratolini, Bassani, Anna Banti, and Guglielmo Petroni. *Botteghe Oscure* occupies a place of special prestige among Italian literary magazines because of its long and steady record and its handsome format. It was never dominated by any single avant-garde tendency, and has succeeded, with admirable skill, in sifting truly representative writers from the immature, the eccentric, and the laggard. However, the absence of any explicit editorial policy, (*Botteghe Oscure* is one of those reviews whose program must be inferred from the selections published), has in the long run decreased its vitality. *Botteghe Oscure* offers little to those who seek historical or critical interpretation, but it continues to satisfy those who are interested in excellent writing for its own sake.

As we have already pointed out, contemporary Italian literary magazines may be divided into two general classes: Those which look back towards "Hermeticism," and those with an ideological orientation which crystallized during the Resistance years and is therefore tinged with "social realism" and in some way related to Marxism. Though the word "Hermeticism" by now belongs to history and is no longer a banner around which writers gather, the basic attitudes of the movement survive. *Botteghe Oscure*, primarily concerned as it is with the literary fact itself, can be said to belong to the "hermetic" current. Its "Europeanism," too, is related more closely to the recognition of Symbolism as a determining European experience, than to any political dreams of a United-States-of-Europe type. Two other magazines that belong to this same current are *Paragone* and *Marsia*. Both would be unthinkable without the background of Symbolism, though they differ in other respects.

Paragone - Letteratura (the hyphen distinguishes it from its sister publication, *Paragone - Arti*) is the better-known, more solid of the two. Among its editors are Anna Banti, C. E. Gadda, and Piero Bigongiari, and it is published under the general direction of the art historian Roberto Longhi. Like *Botteghe Oscure*, *Paragone* does not limit itself to any

one school of writing. It tries to direct itself to the ordinary reader, "the untrained man who has only a vocation for reading," and does not know where to turn for information and guidance (February 1950). In their appraisal of the condition of this reader, the editors of *Paragone* point out that he is caught between the popular criticism of the dailies and weeklies, which is completely devoid of critical rigor and often even of honesty, and the private criticism of the literary periodicals, which is couched in a language comprehensible only to the initiated. *Paragone* aims to steer a middle course, avoiding both extremes. Actually it succeeds only in part. Its "ordinary" reader is in effect an unusually cultured and cultivated reader, a sophisticated reader to whom the convolutions of Carlo Bo, high-priest of "hermetic" critics in the late '30s and early '40s, present no mystery. *Paragone* belongs to a well-defined tradition, that of the Florentine magazines of the early part of the century. It was no mere accident that the very first article ever published in it was by Giuseppe De Robertis, the man who from the city of his election, Florence, exercised the most significant influence on the course of Italian criticism after Croce.

Marsia, on the other hand, has been appearing in Rome every two months since the Fall of 1957. Among its editors are Luigi De Nardis and Alessandro Dommarco, both of whom have been devotees of Mallarmé. In *Marsia* more space is assigned to criticism than to creative writing, and the latter is almost exclusively poetry. Marsyas, Apollo's unfortunate opponent, is for the editors of the magazine a symbol of non-conformity. But their non-conformity is far from disorderly, for their ambition is to restore critical language to a kind of classical purity. "In all periods in which art was recognized as a non-practical experience, theorists and scholars had considerable influence on artists," the prefatory remarks say. To insure the effectiveness of this influence the language of contemporary literary criticism must be freed from "elegant curlicues" and "precious refinements." Good taste and common sense must take the place of pretentious-sounding words ending in "ism." A

commentary by Paolo Gonelli in the first issue and a long essay by Nino Libertini, "Sul problema dello stile critico," appearing between November 1958 and January 1959, are systematic contributions to the solution of this problem. In spite of its unassuming outward aspect, *Marsia* plays an important role among the magazines discussed.

Botteghe Oscure, *Marsia*, and *Paragone* belong to a quite different class from *Il Menabò*, *Officina*, and *Il Verri*. Yet these are all, predominantly or almost exclusively, literary magazines. The same does not hold true for *Nuovi Argomenti* and *Tempo presente*, the two periodicals with which we shall bring this survey to a close. With them we are on the very outskirts of literature, in a kind of undefined territory where interest in political, economic, and cultural problems looms large and where the writer-as-artist disappears almost completely behind the writer-as-intellectual.

When *Nuovi Argomenti*, published in Rome under the direction of Moravia and Carocci, first came out in the Spring of 1953, it was greeted with enthusiasm. The outstanding Italian novelist had joined forces with a lawyer and writer already well-known for his work on *Solaria*, one of the fundamentally important periodicals of the late '20s and early '30s. Moravia and Carocci set out to portray and discuss the "new subject matter" that had entered Italian cultural life since the war. They felt that problems which had appeared under one light in the immediate post-war period had by 1953 taken on a different aspect and had to be re-evaluated. They felt, moreover, that Italian artists and writers, who had at one time participated actively in the political life of the country, had withdrawn to the sidelines, avoiding any commitments whatever. Among the crucial contemporary problems they singled out those that concerned war and peace, religion and the Church, the writer and Communism, American culture and Europe, the reunification of Germany, the phenomenon of De Gaullism, the problems of the Italian South, of the Italian worker, and of the Italian novel. On each of these, *Nuovi Argomenti* published an exhaustive *reportage*. These reportages, though obviously

not works of literature themselves, are closely related to a significant genre of contemporary narrative: the literature of *témoignage*. By collecting documents that "bear witness" to a given situation, *Nuovi Argomenti* suggests new areas open to the creative writer. At the same time, it considers the literary product itself a document leading to a better understanding of contemporary society. *Nuovi Argomenti* is in the humanistic tradition that makes man its central concern, but its interpretation of the forces that mold human destiny is strongly influenced by "liberal" ideologies.

In describing itself *Nuovi Argomenti* had carefully avoided the epithet "rivista di letteratura" in favor of the absolutely bland "bimestrale." *Tempo presente* bears an even more non-committal designation: "Informazione e discussione." It too is published in Rome and it too has an internationally famous name, Ignazio Silone, on its editorial staff. The other editor, Nicola Chiaromonte, is also well-known, outside of Italy as well as within it, for he is a frequent contributor to journals in the United States and England. *Tempo presente*, even more than *Nuovi Argomenti*, is firmly rooted in the contemporary world and is concerned exclusively with "what is happening now to individuals and society." Its introductory statement (April 1956) affirms that in a world of uncertainties, of partial and temporary solutions, the only ethical constant is the free striving after truth. To be informed about what goes on outside the boundaries imposed by nationality, religious, political, or cultural affiliations, is the duty of every man worthy of the name. *Tempo presente's* primary objective is the dissemination of this information, and among its contributors are writers from all parts of the world. The presentation and discussion of works of literature enters only obliquely into its general program.

This brief examination of contemporary Italian literary magazines by no means exhausts the subject. In the September 1956 issue of *Italica* Karl Ludwig Selig listed more than two hundred and fifty "cultural" periodicals published in Italy between 1945 and 1950. Some of these are still in existence. Many more have been added since. Though

not all of them are literary magazines, most of them do in some way touch upon literary questions. But numerical completeness was not the purpose of the present article. Nor was it to attempt a classification detailed enough to make room for the different directions and shades of opinion reflected in an almost overwhelming mass of publications. We have purposely omitted scholarly periodicals, such as *Rivista di letterature moderne e comparate*, *Letterature moderne*, *Rassegna della letteratura italiana*, *Convivium*, and *Studi americani*. We have omitted philosophical publications, such *Vita e pensiero* and *aut aut*, and Catholic periodicals, such as *Humanitas*. We have made no mention of regional magazines, such as the excellent *Galleria*. We have omitted publications devoted to the theater and the film. And we have no doubt unintentionally overlooked any number of other magazines, as significant and as interesting as those discussed.

It might perhaps be asked at this point what the basic motive force behind so much publishing appears to be. We have indicated some recurrent themes: didactic intent, internationalism of outlook, defense of good writing through example, the all-pervasive desire for full self-awareness. "The kind of life we shall live depends on the frankness and sincerity of our communication with our fellow men. On it depends whether we are destined to live genuine or fictitious lives." "Communication is the prime good of society . . . Over against it stands the isolation to which contemporary conditions condemn a great many of those who have something to say." The first quotation is from *Tempo presente*, the second from *Marsia*. The act of writing has always presupposed the desire for human contact. In an age in which the media of communication have multiplied, the problem of communication remains. Italian literary periodicals represent one — or many — attempts to bridge the gap between man and man. In them Italy's future may be tentatively chartered and the past relived. They are a key to the understanding of the country's present literary conscience.

OLGA RAGUSA

Books

ABSOLUTE BEGINNER

Elsa Morante writes on the grand scale. *The House of Liars*, an immensely long, immensely complicated novel of legal and illegal love and longing in a small southern Italian town, has a great number of characters, all of whose feelings are examined with obsessive detail, and almost all of whom are dead by the end — from suicide, tuberculosis, railway accidents, heartache, unspecified fevers and all the other romantic agonies. Practically no one has both father and mother still alive after the age of six — and even if parents do survive, they may turn out not to be the real parents after all. In many ways it is a deeply tiresome book, with the southern temperament lowering for all it is worth, storm clouds always on the horizon, and frustration throttling the characters like some local variety of anaconda. But when she eased up on the anguish Miss Morante showed that she could write both simply and convincingly. Near the end of the book there is a magnificent scene in which a young girl is having the difference between sharing a bed with someone and sleeping with someone you love explained to her by a successful prostitute. The sexual torments of the main characters are here brilliantly and delicately contrasted with a child's eye view of love. A precise and perfect myth is created, the one moment of calm after several hundred pages of torrid passion.

In her new novel, *Arturo's Island* (*L'Isola di Arturo*; New York, Knopf, 1959), the same brooding atmosphere, the same sense of life as a permanent frustration, the same half-bored sadism, the same temperamental instability, are seen through the eyes of an adolescent boy. But where *The House of Liars* was an imaginative reconstruction, for the most part, of events before the narrator's birth, *Arturo's Island* is concerned with the boy's experience alone. Past history is still important, but only as it is revealed and understood by Arturo himself. The novel is correctly subtitled *A Boy's Memoirs*.

Arturo Gerace is the son of a moody, incessantly travelling, half-German, half-Italian, bastard, blond god. His mother died giving him birth. His island is Procida, near Ischia, but neither a fashionable intellectual resort nor an anchorage for steam-yachts of the international set. Its inhabitants fish and farm, peasants to a man, apart from the Geraces. Arturo's childhood is almost

entirely solitary, for the young Neapolitan boy who nurses him through his first years is called up for military service, and the only other servant is an ill-tempered cook who comes in for a couple of hours a day. His father comes and goes, in a restless, god-like way, and during his absences, Arturo roams the island or takes his boat and sails, accompanied only by his dog, Immacolatella. All his fantasies are about his father: his ambition is to grow up so that he can join him on his travels and together they can enjoy fabulous adventures. He reads a lot, dreams a great deal, dawdles through his childhood. And from his reading and conversation with his father he establishes six Absolute Certainties:

- "1. THE FATHER'S AUTHORITY IS SACRED.
2. A MAN'S TRUE GREATNESS CONSISTS OF COURAGE IN ACTION, SCORN OF DANGER, AND VALOR IN COMBAT.
3. THE GREATEST BASENESS IS BETRAYAL, AND TO BETRAY YOUR OWN FATHER, YOUR OWN CHIEF, OR A FRIEND, ETC., IS THE VERY LOWEST DEPTH OF INFAMY.
4. NO ONE LIVING ON THE ISLAND OF PROCIDA IS WORTHY OF WILHELM GERACE AND OF HIS SON ARTURO GERACE. FOR A GERACE TO BECOME FRIENDLY WITH A PROCIDAN WOULD BE DEGRADING.
5. NO LOVE IN LIFE EQUALS A MOTHER'S.
6. THE MOST OBVIOUS PROOFS AND ALL HUMAN EXPERIENCE SHOW THAT GOD DOES NOT EXIST."

These are absolute, incontrovertible truths. While he waits to be grown up, and for his father's return, they become his religion. And the god of this religion is, of course, his father; though his appearances are usually rather unsatisfactory, "The very minute he left Procida, my father turned into a legend again."

Procida is a volcanic island, with an ancient citadel at its peak, now a prison. The Gerace house, at the top of a cliff, is vast and rambling, only half used, never cleaned. It was once a monastery, then an army hostel, then owned by a misogynist called Romeo. Romeo loathed all women of whatever beauty or profession. He threw terrific all-male fancy-dress parties and dinners, but in old age became blind. For the last two years of his life he had been completely dependent on Wilhelm Gerace for companionship and affection, though he received little of the latter. For Wilhelm treated him, as he treats almost everyone, with a mixture of sadism and contempt. But Romeo left him the House of the Guaglioni, as it was called. (*guaglione* is Neapolitan for young man), and there Arturo grew up. His mother was the

first woman to enter the house for three centuries, and somewhat naturally after her death in childbirth, the Procidan women regarded the house as cursed. Wilhelm tells Arturo how he has sworn never to bring any friend of his to the house of his friend Romeo, and Arturo is impressed by the seeming sacredness of this oath. Masculine friendship is a great ideal for him, its importance emphasized by a story his father tells him about another friend, known only as Algerian Knife, a sort of blood brother. This friendship is symbolized by Wilhelm's watch, named "Amicus."

To this highly romantic, extremely lonely, literate but quite ignorant boy, adolescence comes in the form of a step-mother. Shortly before, Immacolatella has deserted her name and him by having a litter after eight years of chastity. She and her puppies all die. Childhood ends in a tangle of fiercely competing jealousies, father, step-mother, later, half-brother, still later, mistress, complicating Arturo's life to the point where he fakes suicide. But to describe the plot in detail would be impossible. Miss Morante adds detail after detail, symbol after symbol, till the whole novel is like the title of one of her chapters — an iridescent spider's web, complex, closely woven, and all with the genuine Mediterranean shimmer.

It is a novel about the struggle in a physically awakening boy between the romantic principles of his Absolute Certainties, and the practical realities of his new family life. Arturo shares his father's moodiness, cruelty, and restlessness, all accentuated by his previous ignorance of any women, or any people, apart from his father. His jealousies lead him to the most extravagant excesses — fake suicide, thoughts of murder, harsh words, intemperate actions — and fantastic imaginings. The interminable dissatisfaction of adolescence broils for nearly four years under the southern Italian sun, and the peculiarities of his upbringing add to the emotional agonies which no one can hope to avoid. The Absolute Certainties become less and less absolute, less and less certain, the childhood god turns into a pitiful and slightly sordid man. At the end Arturo leaves the island with his old nurse, now a soldier, determined to join the army. "International events" have at last impinged upon his imagination.

Not that this is the point of *Arturo's Island*. Miss Morante can hardly mean to suggest that only such a troublesome adolescence will fit a man for the modern world. On the contrary, Arturo's Procidan isolation will hardly help him to adapt to mainland Italy, let alone to what appears to be the impending second world war. Such an exclusive life with no indication of any social or political consideration whatever can only lead to even greater shocks. Miss Morante hints at this by making Silvestro, the ex-nurse, say that in the forthcoming war "on general principles (that is from the point of view of its *real cause*) neither side

was right. But of the two, the one that was definitely wrong was ours. And fighting like that, for no reason but the wrong reason, was like singing with a thorn in your throat, a disaster, with nothing to be said for it." The general principles of which Silvestro talks are quite foreign to Arturo; the Absolute Certainties have no significance at all outside the once enchanted world of the island. Arturo leaves Procida thinking that he is at last a man, because he discovers from Silvestro that he snores like a man. But he has some way to go.

Miss Morante is not concerned, though, with early manhood so much as with adolescence. And dominating the novel, as it dominates the island, is the prison. Arturo imagines that anyone who is sent there must be a real hero, one who has defied law and order for some great romantic ideal. But when at last he meets a prisoner, he turns out to be not only a fairly standard nasty young minor crook, in for a mere two years, but also the object of his father's love. In the final confrontation with his father's true nature (hinted at from the beginning by the rumors about Romeo) Arturo's world crumbles. The father's authority can no longer be sacred when he is guilty of the greatest possible act of betrayal; in inviting his lover to the House of the Guagliioni, and by giving him the watch marked "Amicus," Wilhelm Gerace is revealed as a man who is untrue to his friends. At the same time Stella, the nasty young crook, tells Arturo that his father has never really travelled at all. "Your father," he went on, as if it was something everyone knew, 'isn't the type to run around a lot. He'd be heartbroken, terribly upset. He's the sort that always putters around the same places. You know the old captive balloons? Well, that's him . . .'" Wilhelm Gerace is nothing but a "grotesque."

The Absolute Certainties have already been heavily undermined. Since he never knew his mother, Arturo's faith in mother-love was in any case only theoretical. When he falls in love with his step-mother, as much against her will as against his, Certainty Number 5 wobbles into "No love in life equals Arturo's for his step-mother" which is far from being the same thing. And by taking a mistress on the island, Arturo shows that he cannot live up to the Certainty which requires him as a Gerace not to become friendly with a Procidan. The whole island turns from a demi-Eden into a maze of conflicting emotions: there are places he cannot bear to visit, views he will not look at. But still, as he sails in the sea of Naples, he cannot bring himself to sail away.

It is only after the destruction of his father as a god that Arturo can stand it no longer. His step-mother more or less confesses that she loves him, too, but it is too late for them to do anything about it. He runs down to the shore, and hides in a cave (the novel is full of basic sexual imagery), only appearing when Sil-

vestro, his old nurse, dramatically arrives on the island to see him. And as Silvestro in a sense introduced him to life as a child, so he now takes him to the mainland, to introduce him to adult life. But not before he has thrown much doubt on one of the two remaining Certainties — that true greatness consists of courage in action.

Silvestro, who shows marked left-wing tendencies, listens to Arturo as he speaks of his longing to go and fight, to prove his valor. And then gently says war isn't like that any more. Of all the certainties, only the non-existence of God remains at the end of the novel. As the steamer leaves Procida, Arturo says to Silvestro "‘Listen, I don't want to see Procida while it's receding, and growing dim and gray . . . I would rather pretend that it doesn't exist.'” And in a symbolic sense, he is right, Procida has grown dim and gray, the once enchanted island has disappeared.

It has only been possible to hint at the main outlines of *Arturo's Island*. The great complexity and detail of the plot prevent one from attempting more. It is rather a panoramic view of a peculiarly disturbed adolescence than a novel, a highly romantic, melodramatic, long suffering agony. And, as with *The House of Liars*, there is far too much of the high-strung and iridescent for a non-romantic to take. People suffer so much, in such complicated ways, that they begin to lose one's sympathy. The grand scale can become too grand. But for all that, Miss Morante has written a much better book than *The House of Liars*. What one would like to see from her now is a novel that gets beyond adolescence, that does not leave her heroes and heroines on the brink of life itself. *Arturo's Island* is beautifully constructed, it is written, to judge by Isabel Quigley's translation, with great compassion and understanding and imagination. One wonders hopefully what Miss Morante might achieve if she would leave adolescent fantasy and write about men and women.

[Julian Mitchell]

VERSIONS OF PUCCINI

It is rash to mention either Strauss or Puccini in musically sophisticated company; the *conoscenti*, with some impressive exceptions, tend to deplore them as audible proof of the decline of opera and, indeed, the decline of the West. Strauss is the symbol of Nordic collapse; his pretentiousness, his eclecticism which suggests a lack of personal conviction, his top-heavy intellectuality, his over-orchestrated neuroses, are condemned as the interminable and shallow echo of *Götterdämmerung*. Puccini, less reprehensible in somewhat the same way Mussolini appears to be less so than Hitler, is the symptom of Mediterranean decay — Verdi's in-

nocence sunk to stupidity, his sentiment to sentimentality, his passion to a sadistic pre-occupation with violence, his idealism to an unhealthy eroticism, but North or South, music is caught in a common swamp of sensation, self-pity and cynicism, all of which are reflected in the sterility of the operatic stage. The final documentation of this point of view (although it involves twisting the facts unfairly) is Strauss' survival in Nazi Germany and the Mussolini regime's adoption of Puccini's *Inno a Roma* as one of the official Fascist hymns.

Joseph Kerman, whose *Opera as Drama* is perhaps the most profound, and certainly the most stimulating, study of opera we have, does not present the case against Puccini by resorting to such pseudo-history, although his intense dislike of the composer does seem to be founded on moral as often as aesthetic revulsion. To him, *Tosca*, that "shabby, little shocker," is the darling of the "gallery" (a surprisingly callow snobbism in Kerman) while *Turandot* is the beloved of the parterre, which may rightly point to its finesse as a musical composition, but betray a deep *malaise* in admiring it. He substantiates his aversion by pointing to score and libretto, isolating, for example, the would-be tone poem which opens the third act of *Tosca* and, I suspect, baffles or bores most listeners. In its musical banality and dramatic irrelevance, it can most logically be explained as padding to prolong an otherwise too short act. Turning to dramatic action, Kerman repeats Ernest Newman's dismay at the apparently gratuitous suffering of Liù in *Turandot* which, it could be argued, is the product of a sadistic imagination. Banality, vulgarity, perversity, monotony — these are only four of the slurs hurled at Puccini.

Some of his contemporaries saw no future for him. Although criticism in that era of claque and backstage bombs was often extra-musical, there is reason to believe that in cancelling a second performance of *Butterfly*, the management of La Scala agreed with the writer in *Il Secolo* who stated that "a second performance would have provoked a scandal which would have called for decided action on the part of the Milanese public, who do not relish being mocked. This opera is not one of those, like *The Barber of Seville*, which carry in them the seeds of resurrection." Kerman, our most sensitive prophet, envisions some miraculous improvement in taste which will remove Puccini from the opera house in the next decades.

But the fact remains that more than a half-century after their creation (and incredibly lacking in that mustiness which most *fin de siècle* pieces have), three of Puccini's operas retain the position they have held through countless fluctuations in musical and dramatic fashion. *La Bohème* has supposedly been given more performances than any other "serious" work for the stage in the history of the world. *Frau Schmetterling* is still box-office in Germany, and all-Japanese casts put *Butterfly* to

death in Tokyo frequently. If the tone poem in *Tosca* is a failure, Cio Cio San's night vigil still, in Puccini's phrase, "makes them weep." If the composer is a sadist, his audiences are happily masochist. If he only wrote hardly distinguishable variations on a single tune, it seems to be a tune with an indestructible vitality.

Mosco Carner, in *Puccini: A Critical Biography*, (Knopf: New York), has produced an ambitious and monumental book about this controversial figure, attempting to portray the man, define his aesthetic, and carefully analyze his works from *Le Villi* to *Turandot*. Although there is little new information in the volume, it is very thorough, and nothing, in English at least, is as inclusive. The biographer has scanned all the studies published on either side of the Atlantic, made conscientious if not very revealing pilgrimages to the obvious Puccini shrines, and worked with diligence and enthusiasm. His is a digressive genius and the thread of his argument tends to get lost, but since his incidental anecdotes and observations are generally interesting, one is not overly irritated by this vice. Indeed the tone of the whole book, in spite of its self-conscious "program," is sometimes that of a long and gossiping conversation in the *Kaffeehaus*, often meandering and with occasional idiomatic lapses. The audience at the first night of *Tosca* was, for instance, kept "on the edge of their nerves." One pauses momentarily when he reads that Louys Conchita is "a prostitute, but — this is important for her psychology — only in thought and behaviour." All the same, this critical biography is an impressive contribution, rich in biographical detail, cogent and suggestive in its treatment of the composer's aesthetic milieu, and valuable for its perceptive analyses of individual operas.

Far from being a naive *aficionado*, Carner not only admits the existence of hostile critics, but their frequent relevance, and emphasizes at the outset that he cannot claim ultimate greatness for his subject. Instead he wishes to dissect that limited but powerful genius which the composer did possess, and ask why he did not succeed finally as a "supreme musical dramatist." To his study he brings two tools which are his birthright as a Viennese: musicology, which he studied under Adler, and psychoanalysis which he accepts with something near simple faith.

His erudition as a musicologist is the surest foundation of the book. He places Puccini among his contemporaries (that morning-glory generation of Leoncavallo and Mascagni), and relates his art to the mainstreams of European musical and literary history. He is especially skilled at describing the composer's creative processes and his full documentation proves Puccini's conscientious workmanship and sincere dedication to his art as he understood it. Neither Wagner nor Verdi was more fiercely attentive to his libretti. Puccini's unending search for the germinating word led him on some dangerous literary journeys; if his

detractors cannot admire the texts he did choose, they must commend his judgment in rejecting some which he considered: *King Lear* and Ouida's *Two Little Wooden Shoes*, *The Light That Failed*, *Enoch Arden*, *Anna Karenina* and *The Last Days of Pompeii*. Once he had found his story, he was tireless in adapting it to his peculiar ends, tormenting his librettists over any action or word that he felt false, suggesting revisions or rewriting himself, and strengthening some of the weak melodramas he relished by relying upon his own invention, by borrowing ideas from kindred works (*Butterfly* who in Belasco's original talks like *Topsy* is bolstered by transfusions from similar characters in French literature), by creating an atmosphere missing in the original, typically by suggesting the action's musical ambience (the Japanese, Red Indian and Chinese tunes in his works were culled from respectable ethnological collections), and by concentrating action and tightening dramatic structure. Puccini's final libretti in form and content are usually sturdier stuff than their sources.

However questionable Puccini's goals as an artist were, he was consciously and intuitively very much aware of them. With a practical sense founded upon conviction rather than canniness, he thought precisely in terms of the theatrical event itself. Wagner conceived Bayreuth as an acoustical and spatial necessity which would finally allow his music dramas to be properly seen and heard; Puccini, when he dreamed of an ideal opera house for Rome, sent for the plans of the most successful legitimate theatres in London. Except perhaps in *Turandot*, Puccini never sought for the "significant," the symbolic or mystical, and he was perpetually apprehensive about an average audience's participation in the drama. He was attracted to both *Tosca* and *Butterfly* when he first saw their plays enacted in French and English, in spite of the fact that he did not understand the languages in which they agonized, because he did grasp their characters and situations "wordlessly." His music seldom fails to re-enforce his dramatic action, his melodies are immediately comprehensible, his remarkable natural and audible vocal line is never lost in his large orchestra, his attention to details of costume and scenery, staging and lighting is unusual. In short, he was a master of the theatre and never forgetful of his audience. He pleads for libretti which will make the "common man weep" and, in case anyone should think him cynical or merely crafty, it should be mentioned that their creator himself wept over his *Mimì*, his *Cio Cio San* and his *Tosca*. He was incapable of tragedy, but almost infallible at pathos. The mystical, the profound, the intellectual were beyond his reach, but he did effect his earth-bound miracles. Carner aptly quotes Henry James: "An artist is fortunate when his theory and limitations so exactly correspond."

Alas, Mr. Carner is a better musicologist than biographer.

All the data is here for an integrated and rounded portrait of Puccini, but the man is elusive. This weakness in the book is in part due to the author's illusion of strength in his utilization of psychoanalysis. He has lengthily discussed the "recurrent compulsive pattern" discernible in the libretti (his chief evidence in his autopsy on Puccini's psyche) with Dr. Max Joseph Mannheim, the "distinguished London psychiatrist, who also made a graphological examination of Puccini's handwriting" and, not to my surprise, has come up with a clear-cut answer. His diagnosis of the complex which pained Giacomo into writing his particular masterpieces and prevented him from writing greater ones is intrinsically logical and convincing but, even if it is correct, it is a partial and paltry substitute for "the man."

The psychoanalytical answer to Puccini's success and failure as an artist is based upon his complicated sexual history and the obsessive themes at the core of his typical operas. Puccini, like Dante or Goethe, was conscious of the dependence of his art upon sexual passion; like Yeats, he was attracted by the idea of a Steinach operation and it is fascinating to speculate upon what kind of Wild Old Man he would have made if he had undergone it. His own statements show that he believed in a correlation between sexual potency and musical creativity and an apologetic letter to his wife argues that a happily promiscuous sex-life is the essential foundation for successful art. The women in his life were designed to add fuel to the Freudian fire: he was raised in a household of sisters (one of whom had that character which elevates one to a Mother Superior) by an indomitable, widowed Mamma; he ran away with another man's wife, the statuesque and fearsome Elvira, whom he finally married after the death of her husband and who matured into a righteous and passionately jealous shrew. In her heroic, if psychopathic, rage she hounded an innocent household servant, Doria Manfredi, to suicide by unjustly accusing her of sleeping with her husband. She reported her to the priest, denounced her before the citizens of Torre del Lago in the street, and spied upon her dressed in Giacomo's clothes. The result was a scandal which delighted the Italian press, tormented the guiltless Puccini, and provides an ace in Carner's house of cards. These biographical facts combined with the pattern in Puccini's dramas of prostitutes of varying degrees of sweetness "getting theirs," leads to a theory involving a mother-fixation and deep sex-guilt. Butterfly, Tosca and Cio Cio San are the fruits of this complex; *Gianni Schicchi* and *Turandot* are signs of escape from it. All of this is zestfully and scientifically recorded in *Puccini: a Critical Biography* for those who wish to study it.

In spite of the emphasis on a Freudian Puccini in this volume, the mass of facts allows the reader to ponder on other aspects

of the composer's personality and history: the mischievous boy who inherited music as a profession from five generations of forbears in Lucca, the hungry music student in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, who left an estate of over two million dollars, the a-religious and unintellectual sentimentalist who, owing to his success and fame, was obliged to pose in that mystical mantle which nineteenth-century criticism had woven for Beethoven, Wagner, and Verdi and which fitted very uncomfortably on his narrower shoulders, the self-doubting and dissatisfied musician who listened with dismay to the new creations of Stravinsky and others, and, at times repudiating all he had done, sought new and more exalted directions in which to develop. There were the promiscuities, the numerous residences, the motor-boats and motor-cars, the trips to accept the acclaim of popular audiences all over the world, but, one suspects, he could not escape an awareness of his limitations. There is an agony in being a cross between Rodgers-and-Hammerstein and Mozart, and it is one explanation for the melancholy which was continually noted in his features.

The dilemma of Puccini is focused in his relations with Toscanini. He frequently asked the conductor's opinion during the course of his work, and was ecstatic about the premiere of *La Bohème* and the thirtieth anniversary performance of *Manon Lescaut* under his baton. But Mr. Carner makes it clear that the two men were often antipathetic. During the World War, when Puccini seemed to take a neutral position, Toscanini threatened to slap his face if they met. The conductor, with his dubious preference for Catalani and Boito, was sometimes contemptuous of Puccini's work contrasting the "sugary" Butterfly with the passionate Violetta, the "clever" Puccini with the "truthful" Verdi. And the composer on occasion found the maestro's principles trying. At the time of the first London production of the *Trittico*, Puccini was furious that Toscanini, who had belittled the text of *Il Tabarro* as Grand Guignol, was considered for the post of conductor. "I won't have this *God*," he writes. "He's no use to me . . . I have no need of *Gods* for my operas go all over the world . . . I won't have this *pig*; if he comes to London, I shan't come." Puccini was too conscious of the wonders Toscanini achieved with his scores to say flatly with Ricordi that the conductor was a "mastodontic, mechanical piano," but possibly in his relations with a man who perpetuated something of the integrity of Verdi and possessed a Dantesque inflexibility in relation to abstract ideals, Puccini became aware of his own insufficiencies, and it may be to his credit that he smarted because of them.

One almost feels he is reading allegory when Mr. Carner writes of the composer's funeral. "Amid torrential rain Puccini's mortal remains were then conveyed in a solemn procession to the

Cimitero Monumentale for *provisional* burial in Toscanini's family tomb." And sugary cleverness or not, it was Toscanini who with fire and fanaticism first played the unfinished *Turandot*.
[Kenneth Connelly]

VENETIAN RED

At the beginning of the sixth chapter of P.M. Pasinetti's novel, *Rosso Veneziano*, we see Paolo Partibon, one of the protagonists, walking slowly through his house. He walks heavily up the wooden stairs to the wooden terrace, which, at sunset, looks out on a golden landscape of roofs, chimneys, and red clouds. His wife, Vittoria, is already upstairs in a curtained pavillion, embroidering flowers on silk. When Paolo has climbed to where the two are on the same level, a singular conversation begins between them. Vittoria says, "This Testa, this hunchbacked journalist. Telephoned again."

"He isn't hunchbacked," Paolo answers. "I don't know why you continue to say Testa is hunchbacked."

"For me he is," Vittoria adds.

We have here, captured in this scene and in the few words of this dialogue, one of the preliminary dimensions of the novel. It is a dimension that we have already defined (see Italian Quarterly III, 11, pp. 32 and 38) as a vision of the world seen from above. First we have Paolo who, as he walks slowly through his house, decomposes the objects in it, by an act of clever alchemy, into visual and olfactory sensations. For example, we experience a fusion of color and odor when he speaks of the odor of cigarettes kept in silver boxes. Combined in the same sensation we have the odor of the cigarettes, and the color of the silver boxes in which they are kept. Then there is Vittoria's intervention, in which the deformation of exterior reality is translated into a distortion of normal syntax. This distortion reproduces very well the arbitrariness of her violent caricature of Testa, and the tone and rhythm of the spoken language. For instance, there where we would have expected her to say, "Quel Testa, quel giornalista gobbo, ha telefonato;" she puts a period in the place of the comma dictated by normal syntax, and says "Quel Testa, quel giornalista gobbo. Ha telefonato." This brings us to the definition of one of the characteristics of the whole Partibon family, which includes Paolo, Vittoria, Elena, and Giorgio, and that is their utterly personal and exclusive manner of appreciation and participating in life. Their manners do not correspond to those of others, and they have a violent and dogmatic way of characterizing and defining the others with phrases that are often paradoxical and can be understood only from their own point of view. The conventional gestures of other people are anticipated, and the viewpoint from

which life is seen is slightly blasé. We are of course in a strongly traditional society here, where refusing to greet a person is the greatest punishment one can give him, and looking through a person as if he didn't exist is an art. But in Pasinetti's novel, naturally, we must look elsewhere for the causes of the snobbish hedonism of the family of protagonists. Pasinetti seems to want to say that the gestures of this great, aristocratic, Venetian society, its snobism even, are its only way of reacting to the absurd world of pre-war Europe: a world, the majority of whose members are shouting and screaming, is opposed by a disdainful minority. The moral protest is made in gestures because no other means of expressing it exists. However, the celebration of this rite of a disdainful intelligence which shuts itself off from the exterior world occupies only a part of the novel, the first part. There are many beautiful pages describing the family scene in this part, such as those on the death of Grandmother Partibon. But there are two salutary crises that break the isolation of the ritual and give a dynamism to the whole story: the love of Elena for Ruggero, and Giorgio's voyage in search of the mysterious Uncle Marco. With Elena's love, life is transformed from an intelligent game into a moral and historical drama. The forbidden games of spoiled and overly-intelligent children become the forbidden games of a society and a country which sends its sons to their death in a stupid and criminal war.

The link between family life in Venice and Giorgio's trip is this mysterious Uncle Marco, who is very important to the development of the novel. He is the key that transforms family history into the history of a society and a country. Marco's rebellion is two-fold. It is both the rebellion of the triumphant personality who breaks the chains of family tyranny, and the rebellion against the native land which has ceased to be a country of justice. Marco is really the mirage of Giorgio's conscience, and it is the vague contours of his mysterious adventures which give Giorgio the desire to undertake a precise action and a real search. If Marco represents the precognition of the world's approaching catastrophe, Giorgio represents its discovery. This discovery in the novel has two stages: the trip to Rome and the trip to Berlin. Giorgio reveals for us the face of the enormous bureaucratic capital of fascism that is Rome, and his tour through the ministries of the city is a nightmare.

The visit to Berlin has a double aspect: the aspect of personal adventure — Giorgio in search of his cousin and his uncle; and an aspect more universally historical — the days of violence and the persecution of the Jews. But the two are unified by the fact that Manuela, Giorgio's cousin, is herself part Jewish. Giorgio's intervention is thus of an abstract, idealistic nature, but it is passionate as well. In the light of these events, his hatred of Bolchi,

who personifies the principle of evil in the book, also has a well-defined, concrete side to it. Throughout the novel Pasinetti has known how to alternate abstract images which create a nightmarish atmosphere with concrete, easily recognizable events.

The novel includes a family of politicians, the Fassolas, as well as the Partibon family of artists, but the Fassolas are not politicians in the sense that Bolchi is. If the Partibon family is aristocratic, the Fassolas are bourgeois parvenus. Their Machiavellianism stems from this social condition. For them, as Machiavelli said, activity consists in doing something, anything, even pushing a stone. This activity is their only way of being alive. They know no other way of living, since they lack the intellectual dimension completely. But they are authentic, real people, and for this reason not repugnant. They have another characteristic, however, that complicates their life, and that is the fact that they are close to the Partibons although they despise them; they hate them without being able to live without them. In this sense, Enrico, who loves Elena Partibon without hope, is the most pathetic character in the book. There is a gradation in the Machiavellianism of the Fassola family. Ermete, the government official, in whom intelligence and action are completely separated, does what he does and at the same time he judges the life around him, without letting this judgement intrude in any way on his action. Then there is his brother Augusto, whose intelligence is completely obscured, and who can be awakened from his dream of grandeur only by a shock, the death of his son. There is Massimo, who burns his life out in action. And finally, there is Enrico, for whom moral judgement and political action meet and mingle, completely destroying his efficiency as a politician, and making evident all his human weaknesses. These two family groups can also be seen as symbols of the two dimensions of the novel; the moralistic taste for contemplation and intellectual definition of the human condition; and the sense of movement and action, the transformation of morality into events. It is precisely these two aspects which make Pasinetti's novel so rich and interesting — so easy to read, because of its figurative visualization, and at the same time so subtle. The psychological penetration serves to give vitality to the many characters in the novel, to separate their personalities from the plot, from the richness of events and the amplitude of the landscape, and at the same time to transform the book from a novel of character to one of atmosphere. Those who have experienced fascism can feel this novel as a part of their life. Those who look to novels for stories of human beings finding and losing themselves, loving and hating, will find in this book of Pasinetti's a story of love, suffering, and life that they can not help enjoying. It is a rich book that must be read.

[D. D. T.]

SVEVO SURVEYED

After all these years and after so much critical debate it was inevitable, though tardily so, that a full-length book should appear on *Italo Svevo* (Nistri-Lischi: Pisa). Its author, A. Leone De Castris, has diligently plied the bibliographies of Bruno Maier, the *Vita di mio marito* of Livia Veneziani Svevo, and has of course meticulously read the rather slender corpus of Svevo's opera omnia. It is a generously proportioned book with two introductory chapters on the early life and influences, a long chapter on each of the three novels, a sort of inter-chapter on the Svevian "silence" between *Senilità* and *La coscienza di Zeno*, a chapter on Svevo's language, and two substantial appendices. With the fervor of a guide to unappreciated riches, Mr. De Castris conducts the reader through elaborate analyses that attempt to pay consistent attention both to "linguistic facts" and to the narrative structure. Most of the time he is content to explain the work as one would explain a piece of complex machinery; but every now and then he will suddenly announce that such and such a scene is "bellissima" or "stupenda." The reader may well sense a certain disproportion between analysis and evaluation. Certainly, he may often lose the drift of the argument in the midst of mere presentation of plot. Not that Mr. De Castris does not have greater ambitions: he attempts to characterize, by means of analyzing the fiction and the autobiographical utterances and by means of tracing influences, Svevo's whole outlook on life and art.

This is not so much a life-and-works book in the style of the French *thèse de doctorat* as it is a "spiritual biography." Perhaps it would have been improved if some of the merely conjectural assumptions, derived from ambiguous biographical information, had been entirely dispensed with. Too much is made, for example, of the bourgeois origins of Svevo. Surely in his novels Svevo presents us not with class criticism, but rather with an implicit criticism of all life. Mr. De Castris does restore some balance by insisting that Svevo is not a conventional propagandistic purveyor of "naturalism." But then the balance is upset by an insistence that Svevo somehow was solving his personal problems, moral and social, by writing, at least in *Una vita*, "a study — in a narrative key — of a reality, a concrete organism, in which he could assess that *man* whom his culture and his own sensibility have presented him with." We need more strictly biographical evidence to convince us that there is no confusion in Mr. De Castris' mind between *Dichtung* and *Wahrheit*.

After a competent and sympathetic description of *Una vita*, the book proceeds to analyze *Senilità*. Here Mr. De Castris attempts the sort of analysis which gives his book some claim to originality in Svevian studies: a demonstration in particular passages of the

relation of concrete linguistic detail to the whole structure of an episode. Svevo's use of descriptive adjectives is enthusiastically praised. What one misses is an attempt to see some continuity and unity in imagery throughout the novel. Certainly Svevo's fictional use of objects and nature calls for deeper comment. In raising, in the next chapter, the question of Svevo's "silence" between 1898 and 1923, Mr. De Castris rightly points out that it was not an abandonment of literature and a "retirement" to commerce: rather, Svevo continued to read extensively and to experiment with writing. After all, we are left with quite a bulk of stories and sketches from that period. In fact, Mr. De Castris assures us, Svevo was in search of a European "dimension" whereby to deepen his "tematica umana" and his literary technique in association with the great Russian novelists and with James Joyce. The fruit of his long meditation was *La coscienza di Zeno*, the first European novel, we are told, that is "structured literally" on the unity of character and *coscienza*. "This is the really new result of Svevo's style: this having presented, in the relentless, driving vehemence of things in process, a zone of awareness which in terms of conventional time is called the past, but which lives its disconcerting reality only in the light of a present that clarifies and determines it." This is a good point to make, and to make clearly. One might restate it by saying that in *La coscienza di Zeno* the past is always present in the mind, that one is the complex sum of what one *was*. Such, then, is the highest achievement of Svevo, according to the evolutionary scheme of the book, which would seem to insist that each novel was better than the last. It is possible, however, to raise the question whether *Senilità* is not a consistently greater artistic achievement than its successor. That is the sort of evaluative question that Mr. De Castris does not adequately face. He seems too intent on following what he conceives of as Svevo's "impegno morale." He is led, in fact, to interpret the final apocalyptic page of *La coscienza di Zeno* as somehow Svevo's final artistic and moral vision.

Basically at fault in Mr. De Castris' interpretation of Svevo is his failure to characterize and sufficiently to appreciate the ironic quality of his works. Some attempt should have been made to show the function of irony in dissolving the facile or rigid views of his characters and, since the reader is given a fictional role, of some of his readers. I have elsewhere (*IQ*, Summer 1959) tried to show how pervasive and untendentious that irony is and how it should prevent hasty attempts to crystallize Svevo's world view on the basis of this or that passage. In effect, the reader is in as much danger of drawing the wrong conclusions as the other fictional characters.

Perhaps the most interesting and helpful chapter in the book is the last one on "aspects of the problem of language in Svevo."

The predicament of someone brought up in a local linguistic milieu trying to write within a national literary tradition is explored with understanding. But it is insufficiently stressed that so many Italian writers have encountered similar difficulties in striving to express themselves in a "standard" language significantly different from their spoken language. Giacomo Devoto has already pointed out (in *Studi di stilistica*) the capricious and confused attempts Svevo made, in revising the text of *Senilità*, to eliminate solecisms and dialectal expressions. His conclusion is that some hypercorrections be restored to their original state and that the solecisms be corrected. Mr. De Castris takes a more positive approach, assuming that, for the most part, Svevo's language, and in particular his syntax, is a new and original means of expressing his fictional world. In essence, we are told, Svevo's syntax is pervasively analytic rather than synthetic. Oftentimes it disobeys strict rules of grammar or tightly logical parallelism; in fact, as Mr. De Castris might have pointed out, it reminds the reader of effects common in Baroque writers such as Sir Thomas Browne and Blaise Pascal. One example given is the following:

Alfonso fremette accorgendosi che i peli del suo mento già avevano toccato quella mano e che tuttavia non veniva ritirata.

The "e che" instead of a simple "che" stresses, we are told, the double cause of Alfonso's quivering. It also comes as almost an afterthought: the real reason after the plausible reason has been given. Certainly, this is the right tack to take: to reject notions of sterile purism and to analyze the effects achieved by original and perhaps daring innovations in usage. It is unfortunate that the chapter on language is relatively so short and inconclusive; still, it is ultimately promising.

Two appendices close the volume. The first, a study of the relations between Joyce and Svevo, takes on itself much more conjecture than it can substantiate. Following the common path, Mr. De Castris attempts to show an intimate mutual literary influence between the two novelists. His reasoning is sometimes strained to the limit (as when he says he cannot conceive, though there is total lack of evidence, that Joyce did not introduce Svevo to Henry James' fiction) and his documentation of Joyce's supposed great debt to Svevo is hardly convincing. An unprejudiced comparison of *La coscienza di Zeno* and *Ulysses* would have been much more welcome than the misguided attempt to prove pervasive indebtedness. The second appendix, on Svevo and psychoanalysis, is more acceptable, for the simple fact that there is more objective evidence to adduce. Both appendices, however, confirm the impression derived from the body of the book, that the author is handicapped by too simple a view of causation in

literary matters. The basic assumption is that everything has a simple cause and that any plausible cause is the explanation. But matters are more complex than that and the jump to conclusions, as in the present instance, may lead one irretrievably on the wrong shore.

For all its merits as a long and detailed study of Svevo's fiction, Mr. De Castris' book is in no way definitive and permanently illuminating. A further weakness, perhaps evident in the citations I have rendered into approximate English, is the way it is written. It must be admitted that reading the book is an almost unrelieved chore, not because of its subtlety, which sometimes is penetrating, but because of its complacently hieratic style. The alleged sins of the alleged new critics are nothing compared with the dense and clotted style that mires the reader's every step. A constant parade of near synonyms and serried adjectives obstructs the argument and obtunds the sense. Diligent pruning and a more energetic search for the *mot juste* might restore the reader's confidence in the author's sense of style. But even more fundamentally, the whole critical vocabulary would have to be thought out again. Since much recent Italian literary criticism is at fault, it might be useful to list a few of the fashionable terms which have acquired a kind of ritual resonance: to wit, *poesia* (in a highly subjective sense derived from Croce's unfortunate distinction between *poesia* and *non poesia*), *morale*, *duttile*, *zona*, *problematico*, *istanze*, *icastico*, *esperienza narrativa*, and, what George Orwell would call a "verbal false limb," the phrase *sul piano di*. It is not, of course, that the words do not have their proper uses, but that they have become part of a critical jargon. Take, for example, the following passage:

[Trieste] è al contrario una provincia in cui le strutture stressate del vivere civile e il costante scontrarsi di elementi ideologici e culturali più largamente europei possono ben essere assunti tra la [*sic*] più legittime condizioni ambientali di un'esperienza narrativa così tenacemente rivolta alle zone più interne e drammatiche della malattia esistenziale; di un'indagine che, partendo dal dramma individuale e violandolo fino a giungere alla realtà viva degli uomini—piuttosto che postulando una illusoria oggettività, spesso destinata al tradimento di un ancor più solitario e nostalgico approdo — si realizzava in una tensione polemica e conoscitiva più organica e feconda.

One notes a constant tendency to make the abstract concrete and the concrete abstract. It is not that the sense cannot be extracted, but that the process imposes too great a burden of conjecture on the reader.

One could go on to call into question the author's use of

terms such as "bourgeois" and "decadentism." But suffice it to say that they too are symptoms of a fundamentally uncritical use of words. A good remedy would be to learn from Svevo himself how to hold all preconceptions at bay while one allows one's eyes to wander vigilantly over the both familiar and unfamiliar expanse of fiction and reality. [L.N.]

THE ANATOMY OF POVERTY

In his excellent introduction to *Report from Palermo* (New York: Orion Press, 1959) Aldous Huxley tells us that the book had its origin in the experience of the author, Danilo Dolci, when he came to Sicily in the early 1950's to study the ancient ruins at Segesta. Architect and engineer from North Italy, he, like so many other visitors to Palermo, was apparently unprepared for what he saw in the utter depravity and degradation of large masses of the population of the city and its hinterland. A drastic transformation apparently transpired in the man and in his plans, for instead of pursuing his interest in the ancient remains of the island's civilizations, he chose rather to dedicate himself to the alleviation of its modern ugliness.

Huxley further informs us that Dolci settled down in Trappeto, a rural slum about twenty miles from Palermo, to launch this new career of trying to do something about the wretchedness he saw everywhere about him. He married his neighbor, a widow with five children, and began his work. Huxley calls him a Sicilian Gandhi and a "St. Francis with a degree." But people of his make-up, including Huxley's prototypes, are regarded as aggravating nuisances by the established authorities, and their usual destiny is prison, torture, and finally martyrdom. There is no suggestion by Dolci that he regards himself as a martyr, but the fact is that he has been arrested and sentenced to eight months in prison; a sentence presently appealed to the Supreme Court of Italy. His crime, ironically, is that of trespass on public property, when in Partinico he led a group of unemployed men in repairing a local road for the labor on which they were not to be paid. It was simply mutual volunteer effort toward the solution of a local problem. But the police took Dolci off to prison.

But to the book itself. Dolci recruited a number of people to assist him in his task of documenting the conditions of life of the unemployed, the under-employed, and the uselessly and criminally employed. His method was to obtain the life histories of individuals chosen from 500 interviewed agricultural laborers in the 81 *Comuni*, or townships, of the province of Palermo, and another hundred inhabitants of the Palermo slums. These life

histories, the author assures us, are told in their own words and none have been "altered or touched up in any way." However, their "words" had to be translated from the Sicilian dialect into Italian, and, for our purposes, translated into English. (The method of the life history document has been widely employed by sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists in the United States and was the method used by Rocco Scotellaro in his *Contadini del Sud*.) Dolci supplements these narratives with statistical information on housing, unemployment, destitution, and other social conditions, partly from official sources and partly from surveys which he and his assistants conducted. He also had a schedule of eleven questions which were asked those interviewed:

1. Have you got a trade?
2. How many days do you work in a year?
3. How many years did you attend school?
4. When you are unemployed, how do you manage to live?
5. Why are you unemployed?
6. Do you think it is God's will that you are unemployed?
7. Whose fault is it that you are unemployed?
8. What do you think the various political parties in Italy ought to do?
9. Is the ballot secret?
10. When you apply for work are your political beliefs taken into consideration?
11. What do you think you and each of us should do to get rid of unemployment?

"The object," Dolci says, "of this survey was not to cross-examine people, but to get them to participate, as it were, in a round table conference." His "witnesses in Palermo" are Concetta who has worked in a fish cannery for twenty years, her two grandsons, their mother, and a friend, (a kind of group interview); a barker for various business houses; a former junkman and streetcleaner, now idle; an orphaned "child of sin" and sometime pickpocket, organizer for the Communist Party, and casually, a barber; one of "the fifteen thousand shoemakers in Palermo;" an ex-prostitute now 74 years old; a ragpicker and junkman; a former fruitpicker, now unemployed; a beggar often arrested for begging on Via Libertà where it is against the law because of the bad impression on the tourists; a lottery operator; a black-market cigarette seller; a fisherman; an organ grinder; a mother who tells of All Soul's Day and a fortuneteller and magician — also the most articulate and voluble of the witnesses.

It all adds up to a sordid but fantastic account of the not-so-simple "annals of the poor." When the average persons per

room are, 6.3, 4.2, 8.1 in the three slum areas, and even outside toilets are not available (the men go over to the railroad tracks), when there are few rooms with electric lights, and water is scarce and unsanitary, personal degradation can only be imagined by those who have not witnessed it first hand. Ironically one of the worst of the slums lies between the cathedral and the Palace of Justice.

The "witnesses in the Province of Palermo" tell again the tragic story of impoverished, unemployed families trying to eke out some scant satisfaction for their hunger by scrounging for food in the hills, streams, and swamps—snails, eels, leeches (to treat a long list of illnesses including meningitis and typhus), picking greens, herbs, and whatever appears to be edible. Some collect firewood which they sell in the towns for money to buy bread.

The most touching story of the rural section of the book is that told by a goatherd and three young shepherds; a poignant revelation of the consequences of children growing up in isolation and ignorance. For forty years from the time he was ten he had herded goats. He can now count up to fifty. One of the boys seventeen years old became a shepherd at thirteen and has lived with sheep and goats ever since. "I love sheep and my sheep love me."

"What are the stars? I've seen them many, many times but I don't know what they are. In the pictures of Jesus, there are stars. The stars are some queer sort of eyes, maybe — how can I tell what they are? The moon is the Madonna. I've heard people say the moon's the Madonna, and that's what I say, too. The sun is Our Savior. I pray to the moon and the sun . . .

" . . . What is the wind? I see the grass swaying this way, that way, and that's the wind . . . My mother and father taught me to pray to the sun and the moon. All us shepherds pray to them.

"What's the sea? The world is a sea. I live here summer and winter and don't know what the sea is — I've only heard people talk about it. I've heard them say the world is a sea, so I say the world is a sea.

"I've seen clouds, but I don't know what they are. The wind blows them out of the sky.

"We're in the world because we have a house in it and we work in it. We eat in it too. Why do we come into the world? To work. To eat. To work. I don't know anything else. Men grow old, everything in the world grows old, the animals grow old, and so do Christians. [He seems to refer to people beyond his little world, particularly those in authority as "Christians," but apparently does not so identify himself.] But the sun never grows old."

Gandolfo, a shepherd of thirteen: "If I could choose, I'd rather live with men, not animals."

Leonardo: "I wouldn't. I'd rather stay with my flocks. I love my sheep."

All of them together: "Italy? Never heard of it."

Gandolfo: "I've never heard of America —"

Leonardo and Vicenzo: "We have but we don't know what it is."

Gandolfo: "I've heard tell of the Pope, too, but what sort of thing is it?"

Leonardo and Vicenzo; "The Pope? Never heard of it . . ."

Dealing with the same problem in approximately the same area of western Sicily, Gavin Maxwell in a more recently published work elaborates further the story of poverty and degradation. (*The Ten Pains of Death*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1960). The locales of the two books are only slightly removed from one another. Dolci works in Palermo and the rural villages around it, while Maxwell concentrates on Castellammare del Golfo and the nearby Scopello Tonnara, or tuna fish trap. It was to the latter that he returned after his earlier visit to Sicily to collect information for his book on Giuliano (*Bandit*). He lived at Scopello from March to July, close to the *tonnara* where the men were often idle owing to the very bad fishing season and thus had time to talk. He records their autobiographies, having satisfied himself that through his constant presence the men had talked without the inhibitions common when in the presence of strangers. But he adds another problem: "When a Sicilian's reticence does go it goes completely, more especially on those subjects of which he has been taught to believe that Northerners disapprove. At the forefront of these is sex." So, says Maxwell, he had the problem of expurgation. Yet as one reads these accounts, he wonders what could have been "expurgated" that would have offended the sensitive more than what he included.

But neither this nor Dolci's book is recommended to the sensitive. The facts need to be told, and only those who are the actors in the tragic drama can tell them. Unless people are willing to listen to these tales they can never know the truth. It is to the great credit of Maxwell and Dolci that they have refrained from editorializing, thus allowing the actors to speak for themselves and allowing their accounts to stand by themselves. Curiously, Maxwell says that while he was in Sicily he knew little of Dolci or his work, and what he did know were the garbled and biased accounts in the press. He calls him "the greatest social reformer Southern Italy has ever seen" and deplores the repression which the present government imposes on him. His first thought, he says, after seeing the expurgated Italian edition of Dolci's work, was to abandon his own book and translate Dolci's, but at the time it was not possible to find an English publisher for the unexpurgated work, and Dolci wanted no other.

Maxwell rightly justifies his decision to go ahead with his

own work on the ground that his object was less socio-economic, and broader in scope. He included a few of the "upper-dogs" against whom "the voices of the oppressed are so continually raised." Thus, besides the "under-dogs" whose stories are included, he presents those of a nun who is ambitious to head the orphanage, a priest, a doctor, a *carabiniere*, a schoolmaster, and an "American" (a Sicilian who has lived in the United States).

On the whole, they are a pretty cynical, unprincipled lot. Says the priest: "They don't know how to read or write; the only way to teach them religion is to explain to them the religious laws according to tradition — introducing superstition here and there — it's the best way to do it . . ." And this: "You ask whether we think about these people? Of course, but one can't claim that, among all the other things an unfortunate priest has to do, he must worry about the poor as well . . ." The doctor got through medical school at the University of Palermo only after his father had used his influence to send two high-ranking *mafiosi* "to see" the professor of anatomy who had resisted appeals from members of Parliament. After the visit of the *mafia*, the professor "became as meek as St. Francis' wolf." The *carabiniere*: " . . . It's an interrogation prison, to put it briefly, where the prisoners are made to sing under beating, or under torture if necessary.

"Yes, torture. As a civilian I'd say at once that no human being should suffer these things; I'd say that they're against the moral progress of the human race — but as a *carabiniere* I promise you it's a precious thing and a necessary one, especially in a country like Sicily . . . Our duty is to destroy crime and we have to do it without bothering our heads about the means."

Sicilian and Southern Italian poverty has been well advertised for a long time. Since the end of World War II some efforts have been made to improve conditions through the land reform program and through the promotion of industrial development aided by the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno. But the problem is of such massive proportions that these efforts seem trifling in their impact, although the funds expended amount to more than a billion dollars to date. Meantime, the population grows faster than the ameliorative programs, and doctrines regarding birth control prohibit any efforts at limiting it. Thus poverty feeds upon and reproduces itself in a vicious cycle which nobody has the means and too few the will to break. Can Dolci break it?

[Lowry Nelson, Sr.]

Items

WHILE WAITING for the imminent appearance of Federico Fellini's "La dolce vita," connoisseurs of the Italian cinema, disappointed by the recent slump, may look forward to several other films still in process: a version of John Horne Burns' *The Gallery* by Francesco Rossi; "Il bello Antonio" (based on Vitaliano Brancati's novel) by Mauro Bolognini; and at least the possibility that Vittorio De Sica may film Alberto Moravia's *La ciociara*. Most of the best directors have something under way or something currently on the screen. Hearteningly, the trend seems to be away from the elephantine epic.

THE ITALIAN ECONOMY leapt forward in 1959 at a surprising rate of growth. If the year 1953 is assigned the basic index number of 100, this past year is expected, when all the figures are in, to reach at least 154. Particularly strong gains were registered in the production of textiles, rubber, and chemicals. That Italy's economic dependence on the United States is decreasing seems obvious from the striking rise in exports and decline in imports. Unemployment in the South, however, continues and agriculture, while improving, stands in need of the 800 mil-

lion dollars set aside for re-development in the next five years.

AMONG RECENT or forthcoming books of interest to the Italophile are the following: Cesare Pavese's *The Devil in the Hills* (Noonday Press: New York); Gavin Maxwell's *The Ten Pains of Death* (Dutton: New York); *Modigliani*, illustrated, with text by Franco Russoli and introduction by Jean Cocteau (Harry N. Abrams: New York); *Painting in Italy: From the Origins to the Thirteenth Century*, with critical studies by Amedeo Maiuri and Lionello Venturi, and historical surveys by Bianca Maiuri and Eugenio Battisti (Skira: New York); *The Controversy on Romanticism in Italy* by Grazia Avitabile (S. F. Vanni: New York); Luigi Pirandello's *The Rules of the Game and Other Plays* (i.e., *The Life I Gave You* and *Lazarus*; Penguin Books: Baltimore); *The Selected Writings of Salvatore Quasimodo*, which will include not only poems but also his essay on Dante and a "Discourse on Poetry" (to be issued in the spring by Farrar, Straus & Cudahy: New York); and Olga Signorelli's *Eleonora Duse*, translated by Isabel Quigley (Thames and Hudson: London).

TWO ITALIAN PLAYS have been presented off Broadway so far this season: Pirandello's *Tonight We Improvise* and, with considerable critical success, Ugo Betti's *Time of Vengeance*.

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGE in New Britain is the only college in the country to receive a federal contract for the training of secondary school teachers of Italian at its Summer Language Institute beginning June 27. The Institute will offer specialized training for 60 teachers of Italian, grades 7 to 12. Foreign language teachers and supervisors in public and private schools are eligible to apply for admission, and acceptance is not limited to residents of Connecticut. Teachers attending the Institute will not be charged tuition. Public school teachers will be eligible to receive a weekly stipend of \$75 plus \$15 for each dependent. Dr. Arthur M. Selvi, CCSC professor of modern languages, will direct the Institute. Inquiries should be addressed to him.

THE DANTE ALIGHIERI SOCIETY of Los Angeles has begun its activities for 1960. Dr. Theodore Rothman is the new president of the society. He replaces Dr. Elmer Belt who has just completed a two year term as first president of the society. The new Secretary Treasurer is Miss Fay Hammond.

FOR THE FIRST TIME in 36 years a company of Italian actors will appear in the United States when the *Piccolo Teatro della Città di Milano* will open at the New York City Center on February 23rd with Goldoni's *The Servant of Two Masters*. The last Italian company to visit this country was the one starring Eleonora Duse. The tour ended tragically with the death of the great actress in Pittsburgh in 1924.

The company will perform in New York until March 6th and will then go on tour in other cities and in Canada and Mexico as well.

The *Piccolo Teatro di Milano* was founded in May 1947 by Paolo Grassi and Giorgio Strehler, but it is grounded in the light-hearted tradition of popular entertainment which has characterized the Italian *Commedia dell'Arte* since that famous art form was born in the market places of Italian towns in the 15th century. In twelve years the *Piccolo Teatro di Milano* has produced no less than 82 plays all over Europe, North Africa and South America. The production of *The Servant of Two Masters* with which they will tour America for the first time with Marcello Moretti - by general consent, the world's greatest Harlequin - as Truffaldino, has already been performed 179 times in Italy and 219 times in foreign countries. The production, in Italian but relying so heavily on pantomime and music to make its points that translation

scarcely seems needed, has won the respect of critics everywhere, the support of such divergent talents as Thornton Wilder, Jean-Louis Barrault, Marcel Marceau, Piscator and Peter Brook.

Wherever it has played, the Piccolo Theatre has established itself, to borrow a German critic's phrase, as "a little theatre which has conquered the world." Its own gem-like home on Milan's Via Rovello is a 15th-century palace where between 1494 and 1499, Leonardo da Vinci was the repeated guest of the Duke of Milan, later Louis XII of France. Since 1415 the building itself has served almost every conceivable purpose from that of grain storage to police headquarters; long used as a movie theatre, it became a postwar club for allied Forces, was restored in 1947 and again in 1952 for its present function.

THE FIRST NUMBER of the *Bulletin of Croce Studies in the United States* issued by Professor G. N. G. Orsini of the University of Wisconsin has appeared recently. Professor Orsini is particularly well qualified for the task having been

for many years a widely recognized authority on Aesthetics in general and on Croce's theories in particular. In the first number we find penetrating discussions of the following subjects: *Consciousness and Society* by H. Stewart Hughes; *Benedetto Croce's Earlier Aesthetic Theories and Literary Criticism* by Calvin G. Seerveld; *Croce and Contextualist Criticism* by Professor Wasiolek; and *Croce's Definition of Literary Criticism* by Professor Aldo Scaglione. The *I.Q.* offers its congratulation and best wishes to Professor Orsini and a most worthy undertaking.

AN ENGLISH VERSION of *Il gattopardo* by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, who posthumously won the Strega prize last year, has been chosen by the Book of the Month Club as its May selection. It will be published by Pantheon Books under the inexact title of *The Leopard*. As readers of *I.Q.* will recall, it was reviewed in these pages when it first came out in Italy, and when its success was not yet apparent, by Dante Della Terza who very clearly brought out the importance and merits of this novel.

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ITALY SINCE THE WAR

*The Spring 1960 Number
of the Italian Quarterly
will be devoted to
a survey of Italy since the
end of the last war.*

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